



THE POETICAL WORKS OF ALFRED,  
LORD TENNYSON



ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON  
WITH GROUP OF CHARACTERS FROM  
"THE IDYLLS OF THE KING"

THE POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
ALFRED,  
LORD TENNYSON

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## LORD TENNYSON

ALFRED TENNYSON, first Baron Tennyson, the fifteenth Poet Laureate in succession to Edmund Spenser, was born in the Lincolnshire hamlet of Somersby, of which the Rev. Dr. George Clayton Tennyson, his father, was rector, on August 6, 1809, one of a family of twelve children. When seven years old he was sent to the Grammar School at Louth. The headmaster was one of the old-fashioned, flogging sort, and Alfred got heartily to hate school, which he left in 1820, to return to his father's roof.

Dr. Tennyson taught his boys the classics, mathematics and natural science until they went to Cambridge, giving them, besides, the unfettered range of his library.

Alfred was a constant reader, seldom going for a walk—his favourite recreation—without a book in his pocket. From boyhood he was a keen and sympathetic observer of Nature in every mood and sphere, and possessed all the equipment for a natural historian.

Poetry, however, was his first and only love and, along with his brother Charles, he showed his homage to the Muse by publishing, in 1827, *Poems by Two Brothers*.

On February 20, 1828, Alfred and Charles matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Nervous of temperament, modest, retiring, and fond of solitude, Alfred did not make friends fast, but those friends whose adoption he had tried, he grappled to his soul. In 1829, to his astonishment, Tennyson won the Chancellor's Prize, for which he had not intended to compete, with his blank-verse poem of *Timbuctoo*, beating Hallam, the son of the historian, and Milnes (afterwards Lord Houghton) among others.

From Cambridge, Alfred was summoned home in February, 1831, in consequence of the illness of his father, who died suddenly in his library chair in the following month. The family, however, were enabled to occupy the rectory until 1837, when they were obliged to flit from Somersby at last and, to be within easy access of London, settled at High Beech in Epping Forest. Here they remained for a time, the poet leading a quiet, contemplative life. In 1840, on the advice of a London physician, the Tennysons moved to Tunbridge Wells, but the climate was found to be too trying, and in the next year they went to Boxley, near Maidstone, mainly to be near the Lushingtons, one of whom, Edward Lushington, the Greek scholar and Egyptologist, had married Tennyson's youngest sister, Cecilia. Nearness to London enabled the poet to go to town as often as he pleased, and he was a frequent visitor at "The Cock" in Fleet Street

and Bertolini's at the "Newton's Head," close to Leicester Square. His son tells us that he considered "a perfect dinner was a beefsteak, a potato, a cut of cheese, a pint of port, and afterwards a pipe (never a cigar)."

From 1845 to 1850 Tennyson's people resided in Cheltenham, from whence, however, he made frequent excursions to visit friends in London and elsewhere. In 1850, *In Memoriam*, his masterpiece, was published. This connected series of poems bears the stamp of genius in every stanza.

By now, the success of his poems had given his fortunes an upward cast and Tennyson married Miss Emily Sellwood at Shiplake-on-Thames on June 13, 1850. The honeymoon was spent at Tent Lodge, Coniston. Ere the year was out his worldly position was strengthened by an event he could not have foreseen. William Wordsworth died on the 23rd of April, and the vacant Laureateship was then offered to Tennyson who, after due deliberation, consented to fill the post, to which he was appointed on November 19. It was an ideal and, in fact, the only proper succession to Wordsworth.

Unhappily the Tennysons' first baby died at birth, but better fortune awaited the next, a boy also, who was born at their home in Twickenham on August 11, 1852. He was named Hallam, and became the second Baron. The death of the Iron Duke on September 14 of that year inspired the stately *Ode to the Duke of Wellington*, which has taken its place amongst the imperishable treasures of English literature. The poet and his wife had had unusual difficulty in finding a house to their liking, but in 1853 they happened upon the mansion of Farringford, standing in delectable grounds, near Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, and having acquired the option of purchase, moved into it in November and made it their home for forty years. Here their third child, named Lionel, was born on March 16, 1854. This was the year of the fierce fighting in the Crimea, and *The Times* account of the Balaclava Ride, with its phrase of "some one had blundered," so wrought upon the Laureate that he composed, at white heat, his famous *Charge of the Light Brigade*. This poem so gratified the soldiers that Tennyson had 1,000 copies of it printed next year for distribution among them.

In 1855 *Maud* was published and the book sold all right. With the gold it fetched, the poet bought Farringford. In this year, too, the degree of D.C.L. was conferred upon him by Oxford University with due ceremony in the Sheldonian Theatre.

Soon after Prince Albert's death (December 14, 1861) Tennyson learned that Princess Alice desired him to commemorate her father, and accordingly he arranged, early in 1862, for a new edition of the *Idylls*, for which he wrote the chaste and impressive Dedication to the Prince Consort. This tender tribute brought him under the personal notice of the Court and, in April, he paid his first visit to the Queen.

One of the penalties inseparable from fame is the homage of the devotee and the curiosity of the tourist. Tennyson found their intrusion on his privacy at Farringford intolerable, and he ultimately resolved to build another house to which he might go at such seasons as the attentions of his fans verged on persecution. For this purpose he purchased in 1867 a superbly situated estate at Blackdown, near Haslemere.

If Tennyson's Spring had been tempestuous, compensation was vouchsafed in his Autumn, for this was peaceful, mellow and happy.

During the autumn of 1883 Tennyson made a prolonged and most happy cruise in the *Pembroke Castle*, visiting the western islands of Scotland, the Norwegian fjords and Denmark. In the course of the voyage Mr. Gladstone, on behalf of the Queen, offered him a peerage, which he consented to accept, recognizing the honour intended to be done to Literature in his person.

After Tennyson had entered upon his eighty-fourth year, his physical decline became very marked. Though feeble and nearly blind, he tried to read his favourite bits in Shakespeare, whose works were never far from his pillow. He was quite conscious that his end was near, saying, "That's well," in answer to the doctor's intimation. At half-past one in the morning of October 6, 1892, he died. They laid him in Westminster Abbey, on October 12. Three weeks after his demise his last volume was published, *The Death of Ch<sup>i</sup>none and Other Poems*. The last poem he finished was *Whirl and Follow the Sun*, and his last piece of prose, the preface to *Kapiolani*.



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## EARLY POEMS

### “ POEMS, CHIEFLY LYRICAL ”

(1830)

#### ELEGIACS

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming the broad valley dimmed in the gloaming :  
Thoro' the black-stemmed pines only the far river shines.  
Creeping through blossomy rushes and bowers of rose-blowing bushes,  
Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble and fall.  
Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly ; the grasshopper carolleth clearly ;  
Deeply the turtle coos ; shrilly the owlet halloos ;

Winds creep ; dews fall chilly : in her first sleep earth breathes stillly : Over the pools in the burn water gnats murmur and mourn.  
Sadly the far kine loweth : the glimmering water outfloweth : Twin peaks shadowed with pine slope to the dark hyaline.  
Low-throned Hesper is stay'd between the two peaks ; but the Naiad Throbbing in mild unrest holds him beneath in her breast.  
The antient poetess singeth, that Hesperus all things bringeth, Smoothing the wearied mind : bring me my love, Rosalind.  
Thou comest morning and even ; she cometh not morning or even.  
False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my sweet Rosalind ?

#### THE “ HOW ” AND THE “ WHY ”

I AM any man's suitor,  
If any will be my tutor :  
Some say this life is pleasant,  
Some think it spedeth fast :  
In time there is no present,  
In eternity no future,  
In eternity no past.  
We laugh, we cry, we are born, we die,  
Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why* ?

The bulrush nods unto its brother,  
The wheatears whisper to each other :  
What is it they say ? What do they there ?  
Why two and two make four ? Why round is not square ?  
Why the rock stands still, and the light clouds fly ?  
Why the heavy oak groans, and the white willows sigh ?  
Why deep is not high, and high is not deep ?  
Whether we wake, or whether we sleep ?  
Whether we sleep, or whether we die ?  
How you are you ? Why I am I ?  
Who will ridde me the *how* and the *why* ?

The world is somewhat ; it goes on somehow ;  
But what is the meaning of *then* and *now* ?  
I feel there is something ; but how and what ?

I know there is somewhat; but what  
and why?

I cannot tell if that somewhat be I.

The little bird pipeth—" why ?  
why ? "

In the summerwoods when the sun  
falls low

And the great bird sits on the oppo-  
site bough,

And stares in his face and shouts,  
" how ? how ? "

And the black owl scuds down the  
mellow twilight,

And chaunts, " how ? how ? " the  
whole of the night.

Why the life goes when the blood is  
spilt ?

What the life is ? where the soul  
may lie ?

Why a church is with a steeple built;  
And a house with a chimnypot ?  
Who will riddle me the how and the  
what ?

Who will riddle me the what and  
the why ?

#### SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS OF A SECOND - RATE SENSITIVE MIND NOT IN UNITY WITH ITSELF

Oh God ! my God ! have mercy now.  
I faint, I fall. Men say that thou  
Did'st die for me, for such as *me*,  
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn.  
And that my sin was as a thorn  
Among the thorns that girt thy brow,  
Wounding thy soul.—That even now,  
In this extremest misery  
Of ignorance, I should require  
A sign ! and if a bolt of fire  
Would rive the slumbrous summer-  
noon

While I do pray to thee alone,  
Think my belief would stronger grow !  
Is not my human pride brought low ?  
The boastings of my spirit still ?  
The joy I had in my freewill  
All cold, and dead, and corpselike  
grown ?

And what is left to me, but thou,

And faith in thee ? Men pass me by;  
Christians with happy countenances—  
And children all seem full of thee !  
And women smile with saintlike

glances  
Like thine own mother's when she  
bowed

Above thee, on that happy morn  
When angels spake to men aloud,  
And thou and peace to earth were  
born.

Goodwill to me as well as all—  
—I one of them : my brothers they :  
Brothers in Christ—a world of peace  
And confidence, day after day ;  
And trust and hope till things should  
cease,

And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith !  
To hold a common scorn of death !  
And at a burial to hear  
The breaking cords which wound  
and eat

Into my human heart, whene'er  
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not  
fear,  
With hopeful grief, were passing  
sweet !

A grief not uninformed, and dull,  
Hearted with hope, of hope as full  
As is the blood with life, or night  
And a dark cloud with rich moon-  
light.

To stand beside a grave, and see  
The red small atoms wherewith we  
Are built, and smile in calm, and say,—  
" These little motes and grains shall  
be

Clothed on with immortality  
More glorious than the noon of day.  
All that is pass'd into the flowers,  
And into beasts, and other men,  
And all the Norland whirlwind  
showers

From open vaults, and all the sea  
O'erwashes with sharp salts, again  
Shall fleet together all, and be  
Indued with immortality."

Thrice happy state again to be  
The trustful infant on the knee !  
Who lets his waxen fingers play  
About his mother's neck, and knows

Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.  
They comfort him by night and day  
They light his little life alway ;  
He hath no thought of coming woes ;  
He hath no care of life or death,  
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,  
Because the Spirit of happiness  
And perfect rest so inward is ;  
And loveth so his innocent heart,  
Her temple and her place of birth,  
Where she would ever wish to dwell,  
Life of the fountain there, beneath  
Its salient springs, and far apart,  
Hating to wander out on earth,  
Or breathe into the hollow air,  
Whose chillness would make visible  
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,  
Which mixing with the infant's blood,  
Fullfills him with beatitude.  
Oh ! sure it is a special care  
Of God, to fortify from doubt,  
To arm in proof, and guard about  
With triplemailed trust, and clear  
Delight, the infant's dawning year.  
Would that my gloomed fancy were  
As thine, my mother, when with  
brows

Propped on thy knoos, my hands up-  
held

In thine, I listened to thy vows,  
For me outpoured in holiest prayer—  
For me unworthy !—and beheld  
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that  
knew

The beauty and repose of faith,  
And the clear spirit shining through.  
Oh ! wherefore do we grow awry  
From roots which strike so deep ? why  
dare

Paths in the desert ? Could not I  
Bow myself down, where thou hast  
knelt,

To th' earth—until the ice would melt  
Here, and I feel as thou hast felt ?  
What Devil had the heart to scathe  
Flowers thou hadst reared—to brush  
the dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave  
Was deep, my mother, in the clay ?  
Myself ? Is it thus ? Myself ? Had

I

So little love for thee ? But why  
Prevailed not thy pure prayers ?  
Why pray

To one who heeds not, who can save  
But will not ? Great in faith, and  
strong

Against the grief of circumstance  
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if  
Thou pleadest still, and seest me  
drive

Through utter dark a full-sailed skiff,  
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance  
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low  
Unto the death, not sunk ! I know  
At matins and at evensong,  
That thou, if thou wert yet alive,  
In deep and daily prayers would'st  
strive

To reconcile me with thy God.  
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold  
At heart, thou wouldest murmur still—  
" Bring this lamb back into thy fold,  
My Lord, if so it be thy will."  
Would'st tell me I must brook the rod,  
And chastisement of human pride ;  
That pride, the sin of devils, stood  
Betwixt me and the light of God !  
That hitherto I had despaired,  
And had rejected God—that grace  
Would drop from his o'erbrimming  
love,

As manna on my wilderness,  
If I would pray—that God would  
move

And strike the hard hard rock, and  
thence,

Sweet in their utmost bitterness,  
Would issue tears of penitence  
Which would keep green hope's life.

Alas !

I think that pride hath now no place  
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,  
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then ? Why not  
yet

Anchor thy frailty there, where man  
Hath moored and rested ? Ask the  
sea

At midnight, when the crisp slope  
waves,

After a tempest, rib and fret  
The broad imbaséd beach, why he  
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn ?  
Wherefore his ridges are not curls  
And ripples of an inland meer ?  
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can

## THE BURIAL OF LOVE

4

Draw down into his vexéd pools  
All that blue heaven which hues and  
paves  
The other ? I am too forlorn,  
Too shaken : my own weakness fools  
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,  
Moved from beneath with doubt and  
fear.

" Yet," said I, in my morn of youth,  
The unsunned freshness of my  
strength,  
When I went forth in quest of truth,  
" It is man's privilege to doubt,  
If so be that from doubt at length  
Truth may stand forth unmoved of  
change,  
An image with profulgent brows,  
And perfect limbs, as from the storm  
Of running fires and fluid range  
Of lawless airs, at last stood out  
This excellence and solid form  
Of constant beauty. For the Ox  
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills  
The hornéd valleys all about,  
And hollows of the fringed hills  
In summerheats, with placid lows  
Unfearing, till his own blood flows  
About his hoof. And in the flocks  
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,  
And raceth freely with his fere,  
And answers to his mother's calls  
From the flowered furrow. In a time,  
Of which he wots not, run short pains  
Through his warm heart ; and then,  
from whence

He knows not, on his light there falls  
A shadow ; and his native slope,  
Where he was wont to leap and climb,  
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,  
And something in the darkness draws  
His forehead earthward, and he dies.  
Shall men live thus, in joy and hope  
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,  
Living, but that he shall live on ?  
Shall we not look into the laws  
Of life and death, and things that  
seem,  
And things that be, and analyse  
Our double nature, and compare  
All creeds till we have found the one,  
If one there be ? " Ay me ! I fear  
All may not doubt, but everywhere  
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,

Whom call I Idol ? let thy dove  
Shadow me over, and my sins  
Be unremembered, and thy love  
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet  
Somewhat before the hoavy clod  
Weighs on me, and the busy fret  
Of that sharpead worm begins  
In the gross blackness underneath.

Oh weary life ! oh weary death !  
Oh spirit and heart made desolate !  
Oh damnéd vacillating state !

## THE BURIAL OF LOVE

His eyes in eclipse,  
Pale-cold his lips,  
The light of his hopes unfed,  
Mute his tongue,  
His bow unstrung  
With the tears he hath shed,  
Backward drooping his graceful  
head.  
Love is dead :  
His last arrow is sped ;  
He hath not another dart ;  
Go—carry him to his dark deathbed ;  
Bury him in the cold, cold heart—  
Love is dead.

Oh, truest love ! art thou forlorn,  
And unrevenged ? thy pleasant  
wiles  
Forgotten, and thine innocent  
joy ?  
Shall hollow-hearted apathy,  
The cruellest form of perfect scorn,  
With languor of most hateful  
smiles,  
For ever write,  
In the withered light  
Of the tearless eye,  
An epitaph that all may spy ?  
No ! sooner she herself shall die.

For her the showers shall not fall,  
Nor the round sun shine that shineth  
to all ;  
Her light shall into darkness  
change ;  
For her the green grass shall not  
spring,  
Nor the rivers flow, nor the sweet  
birds sing,  
Till Love have his full revenge.

## SONG

7

## TO —

SAINTED Juliet ! dearest name !  
 If to love be life alone,  
 Divinest Juliet,  
 I love theo, and live ; and yet  
 Love unreturned is like the frag-  
 rant flame  
 Folding the slaughter of the sacrifice  
 Offered to gods upon an altar-  
 throne ;  
 My heart is lighted at thine eyces,  
 Changed into fire, and blown about  
 with sighs.

## SONG

I

I' THE glooming light  
 Of middle night  
 So cold and white,  
 Worn Sorrow sits by the moaning  
 wave ;  
 Beside her are laid  
 Her mattock and spade,  
 For she hath half delved her own deep  
 grave.  
 Alone she is there :  
 The white clouds drizzle : her hair  
 falls loose ;  
 Her shoulders are bare ;  
 Her tears are mixed with the beaded  
 dews.

II

Death standeth by ;  
 She will not die ;  
 With glazèd eye  
 She looks at her grave : she cannot  
 sleep ;  
 Ever alone  
 She maketh her moan :  
 She cannot speak : she can only  
 weep,  
 For she will not hope.  
 The thick snow falls on her flake by  
 flake,  
 The dull wave mourns down the  
 slope,  
 The world will not change, and her  
 heart will not break.

## SONG

I

THE lintwhite and the throstlecock  
 Have voiccs sweet and clear ;  
 All in the blooméd May.  
 They from the blosmy brere  
 Call to the fleeting year,  
 If that he would them hear  
 And stay.  
 Alas ! that one so beautiful  
 Should have so dull an ear.

II

Fair year, fair year, thy children call,  
 But thou art deaf as death ;  
 All in the blooméd May.  
 When thy light perisheth  
 That from thee issueth,  
 Our life evanisheth :  
 Oh ! stay.  
 Alas ! that lips so cruel-dumb  
 Should have so sweet a breath !

III

Fair year, with brows of royal love  
 Thou comest, as a king.  
 All in the blooméd May.  
 Thy golden largess fling,  
 And longer hear us sing ;  
 Though thou art fleet of wing,  
 Yet stay.  
 Alas ! that eyes so full of light  
 Should be so wandering !

IV

Thy locks are all of sunny sheen  
 In rings of gold yronne,<sup>1</sup>  
 All in the blooméd May.  
 We pri'hee pass not on ;  
 If thou dost leave the sun,  
 Delight is with thee gone,  
 Oh ! stay  
 Thou art the fairest of thy feres,  
 We pri'hee pass not on.

1 "His crispè hair in ringis was yronne." Chaucer, *Knight's Tale*.

## SONG—ALL THINGS WILL DIE

## ONG

## I

' hath its night,  
gilt its morn,  
dark and bright  
hours are borne;  
Ah! welaway!

Seasons flower and fade;  
Golden calm and storm  
Mingle day by day.  
There is no bright form  
Doth not cast a shade—  
Ah! welaway!

## II

When we laugh, and our mirth  
Apes the happy vein,  
We're so kin to earth,  
Pleasance fathers pain—  
Ah! welaway!  
Madness laugheth loud  
Laughter bringeth tears.  
Eyes are woin away  
Till the end of fears  
Cometh in the shroud—  
Ah! welaway!

## III

All is change, woe or weal;  
Joy is Sorrow's brother,  
Grief and gladness steal  
Symbols of each other;  
Ah! welaway!  
Larks in heaven's cope  
Sing the culvers mourn  
All the livelong day  
Be not all forlorn  
Let us weep in hope—  
Ah! welaway!

## NOTHING WILL DIE

When will the stream be aweary of  
flowing  
Under my eye?  
When will the wind be aweary of  
blowing  
Over the sky?

When will the clouds be aweary of  
fleeting?  
When will the heart be aweary of  
beating?  
And nature die?  
Never, oh! never, nothing will die;  
The stream flows,  
The wind blows,  
The cloud fleets,  
The heart beats,  
Nothing will die,  
Nothing will die,  
All things will change  
Through eternity.  
'Tis the world's winter;  
Autumn and summer  
Are gone long ago  
Earth is dry to the centre,  
But spring a new com'er—  
A spring rich and strange,  
Shall make the winds blow  
Round and round,  
Through and through,  
Here and there,  
Till the air  
And the ground  
Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made,  
It will change, but it will not fade.  
So let the wind range,  
For even and morn  
Even will be  
Through eternity.  
Nothing was born;  
Nothing will die;  
All things will change.

## ALL THINGS WILL DIE

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its  
flowing  
Under my eye;  
Warmly and broadly the south winds  
are blowing  
Over the sky  
One after another the white clouds  
are floating,  
Every heart this May morning in  
joyance is beating  
Full merrily;

Yet all things must die.  
The stream will cease to flow ;  
The wind will cease to blow ;  
The clouds will cease to fleet ;  
The heart will cease to beat ;  
For all things must die.

All things must die.  
Spring will come never more.  
Oh ! vanity !  
Death waits at the door.  
See ! our friends are all forsaking  
The wine and the merrymaking.  
We are called—we must go.  
Laid low, very low,  
In the dark we must lie.  
The merry glances are still ;  
The voice of the bird  
Shall no more be heard,  
Nor the wind on the hill.  
Oh ! misery !  
Hark ! death is calling  
While I speak to ye,  
The jaw is falling,  
The red cheek paling,  
The strong limbs failing ;  
Ice with the warm blood mixing ;  
The eyeballs fixing.  
Nine times goes the passing bell :  
Ye merry souls farewell.

The old earth  
Had a birth,  
As all men know  
Long ago.  
And the old earth must die.  
So let the warm winds range,  
And the blue wave beat the shore ;  
For ever and morn  
Ye will never see  
Through eternity.  
All things were born.  
Ye will come never more,  
For all things must die.

## HERO TO LEANDER

Oh go not yet, my love,  
The night is dark and vast ;  
The white moon is hid in her  
heaven above,  
And the waves climb high and  
fast.

Oh ! kiss me, kiss me, once again,  
Lest thy kiss should be the last.  
Oh kiss me ere we part ;  
Grow closer to my heart.  
My heart is warmer surely than the  
bosom of the main.

O joy ! O bliss of blisses !  
My heart of hearts art thou.  
Come bathe me with thy kisses,  
My eyelids and my brow.  
Hark how the wild rain hisses,  
And the loud sea roars below.

Thy heart beats through thy rosy  
limbs,  
So gladly doth it stir :  
Thine eye in drops of gladness  
swims,  
I have bathed thee with the plea-  
sant myrrh ;  
Thy locks are dripping balm :  
Thou shalt not wander hence to-  
night,  
I'll stay thee with my kisses.  
To-night the roaring brine  
Will read thy golden tresses ;  
The ocean with the morrow light  
Will be both blue and calm ;  
And the billow will embrace thee with  
a kiss as soft as mine.

No western odours wander  
On the black and moaning sea,  
And when thou art dead, Leander,  
My soul must follow thee !  
Oh go not yet, my love,  
Thy voice is sweet and low :  
The deep salt wave breaks in above  
Those marble steps below.  
The turret stairs are wet  
That lead into the sea.  
Leander ! go not yet,  
The pleasant stars have set :  
Oh ! go not, go not yet,  
Or I will follow thee.

## THE MYSTIC

ANGELS have talked with him, and  
showed him thrones :  
Ye knew him not : he was not one of  
ye,

## THE GRASSHOPPER

Ye scorned him with an undiscerning scorn :  
 Ye could not read the marvel in his eye,  
 The still serene abstraction : he hath felt  
 The vanities of after and before ;  
 Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart  
 The stern experiences of converse lives,  
 The linked woes of many a fiery change  
 Had purified, and chastened, and made free.

Always there stood before him, night and day,  
 Of wayward vary-coloured circumstance  
 The imperishable presences serene,  
 Colossal, without form, or sense, or sound,  
 Dim shadows but unwaning presences,  
 Four-faced to four corners of the sky :  
 And yet again, three shadows, fronting one,  
 One forward, one respectant, three but one ;  
 And yet again, again and evermore,  
 For the two first were not, but only seemed,  
 One shadow in the midst of a great light,  
 One reflex from eternity on time,  
 One mighty countenance of perfect calm,  
 Awful with most invariable eyes.  
 For him the silent congregated hours,  
 Daughters of time, divinely tall, beneath  
 Severe and youthful brows, with shining eyes  
 Smiling a godlike smile (the innocent light  
 Of earliest youth pierced through and through with all  
 Keen knowledges of low-embow'd eifd)  
 Upheld, and ever hold aloft the cloud  
 Which droops low hung on either gate of life,  
 Both birth and death : he in the centre fixt,

Jaw far on each side through the grated gates  
 Most pale and clear and lovely distances.  
 He often lying broad awake, and yet Remaining from the body, and apart In intellect and power and will, hath heard  
 Time flowing in the middle of the night,  
 And all things creeping to a day of doom,  
 How could ye know him ? Ye were yet within  
 The narrower circle ; he had wellnigh reached  
 The last, which with a region of white flame,  
 Pure without heat, into a larger air Upburning, and an ether of black blue,  
 Investeth and ingirds all other lives.

THE GRASSHOPPER

7

Voice of the summer wind,  
 Joy of the summer plain,  
 Life of the summer hours,  
 Carol clearly, bound along,  
 No Tithon thou as poets reign  
 (Shame fall 'em they are deaf and blind)  
 But an insect lithe and strohg,  
 Bowing the seeded summer flowers.  
 Prove their falsehood and thy quarrel,  
 Vaulting on thine airy feet.  
 Clap thy shielded sides and carol,  
 Carol clearly, chirrup sweet.  
 Thou art a mailed warrior in youth and strength complete ;  
 Armed cap-a-pie,  
 Full fair to see ;  
 Unknowing fear,  
 Undreading loss,  
 A gallant cavalier,  
 Sans peur et sans reproche,  
 In sunlight and in shadow,  
 The Bayard of the meadow.

## II

I would dwell with thee,  
Merry grasshopper,  
Thou art so glad and free,  
And as light as air;  
Thou hast no sorrow or tears,  
Thou hast no compt of years,  
No withered immortality,  
But a short youth sunny and free.  
Carol clearly, bound along.  
Soon thy joy is over,  
A summer of loud song,  
And slumbers in the clover.  
What hast thou to do with evil  
In thine hour of love and revel,  
In thy heat of summer pride,  
Pushing the thick roots aside  
Of the singing flowered grasses,  
That brush thee with their silken  
tresses?  
What hast thou to do with evil,  
Shooting, singing, ever springing  
In and out the emerald glooms,  
Ever leaping, ever singing,  
Lighting on the golden blooms?

## LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGET-FULNESS

Ere yet my heart was sweet Love's  
tomb,  
Love laboured honey busily.  
I was the hive, and Love the bee,  
My heart the honeycomb,  
One very dark and chilly night  
Pride came beneath and held a light.  
The cruel vapours went through all,  
Sweet Love was withered in his cell;  
Pride took Love's sweets, and by a  
spell  
Did change them into gall;  
And Memory though fed by Pride  
Did wax so thin on gall,  
Awhile she scarcely lived at all.  
What marvel that she died?

## CHORUS,

IN AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA, WRITTEN  
VERY EARLY

THE varied earth, the moving heaven,  
The rapid waste of roving sea,

The fountain-pregnant mountains  
riven  
To shapes of wildest anarchy,  
By secret fire and midnight storms  
That wander round their windy  
cones,  
The subtle life, the countless forms  
Of living things, the wondrous  
tones  
Of man and beast are full of  
strange  
Astonishment and boundless  
change.

The day, the diamonded night,  
The echo, feeble child of sound,  
The heavy thunder's gridding might,  
The herald lightning's starry bound,  
The vocal spring of bursting bloom,  
The naked summer's glowing birth,  
The troublous autumn's sallow gloom,  
The hoarhead winter paving earth  
With sheeny white, are full of  
strange  
Astonishment and boundless  
change.

Each sun which from the centre flings  
Grand music and redundant fire,  
The burning belts, the mighty rings,  
The murmurous planets' rolling  
choir,  
The globe-filled arch that cleaving air,  
Lost in its own effulgence sleeps,  
The lawless comets as they glare,  
And thunder through the sapphire  
depths,  
In wayward strength, are full of  
strange  
Astonishment and boundless  
change.

## LOST HOPE

You cast to ground the hope which  
once was mine;  
But did the while your harsh decree  
deplore,  
Embalming with sweet tears the  
vacant shrine,  
My heart, where Hope had been  
and was no more.

So on an oaken sprout  
A goodly acorn grew,  
But winds from heaven shook the  
acorn out,  
And filled the cup with dew

## THE TEARS OF HEAVEN

HEAVEN weeps above the earth all  
night till morn  
In darkness weeps as all ashamed to  
weep,  
Because the earth hath made her  
state forlorn  
With self-wrought evils of unnum-  
bered years,  
And doth the fruit of her dishonour  
reap  
And all the day heaven gathers back  
her tears  
Into her own blue eyes so clear and  
deep,  
And showering down the glory of  
lightsome day  
Smiles on the earth's worn brow to  
win her if she may.

## LOVE AND SORROW

O MAIDEN, fresher than the first  
green leaf  
With which the fearful springtide  
flecks the lea,  
Weep not, Almida, that I said to  
thee  
That thou hast half my heart, for  
bitter grief  
Doth hold the other half in sovrainty  
Thou art my heart's sun in love's  
crystalline  
Yet on both sides at once thou  
caust not shine.  
Thine is the bright side of my heart,  
and thine  
My heart's day, but the shadow of my  
heart,  
Issue of its own substance, my heart's  
night  
Thou canst not lighten even with thy  
light,  
All powerful in beauty as thou art

Almida if my heart were substance  
less  
Then might thy ray, pass through  
to the other side  
So swiftly, that they nowhere would  
abide  
But lose themselves in utter empti-  
ness  
Half light, half shadow, let my spirit  
sleep,  
They never learned to love who  
never knew to weep

## TO A LADY SLEEPING

O Thou whose fingered lids I gaze  
upon,  
Through whose dim brain the winged  
dreams are borne,  
Unroof the shimer of clearest vision,  
In honour of the silver-sleeked morn  
Long hath the white wave of the  
virgin light  
Driven back the bellow of the dia-  
mortal dark  
Thou all unwittingly prolongest night,  
Though long ago listening the porch'd  
lark,  
With eyes dropt downward through  
the blue scene,  
Over heaven's parapets the angels  
lean

## SONNET

COULD I outwear my present state of  
woe  
With one brief winter, and induce the  
the spring  
Hues of fresh youth, and mightily  
outgrow  
The wan dark coil of faded suffering—  
Forth in the pride of beauty issuing  
A sheeny snake, the light of vernal  
bowers,  
Moving his crest to all sweet plots of  
flowers  
And watered vallies where the young  
birds sing;  
Could I thus hope my lost delight's  
renewing.

I straightly would command the tears  
to creep  
From my charged lids; but inwardly  
I weep :  
Some vital heat as yet my heart is  
wooking :  
This to itself hath drawn the frozen  
rain  
From my cold eyes and melted it  
again.

## SONNET

Though Night hath climbed her peak  
of highest noon,  
And bitter blasts the screaming  
autumn whirl,  
All night through archways of the  
bridged pearl,  
And portals of pure silver walks the  
moon.  
Walk on, my soul, nor crouch to agony,  
Turn cloud to light, and bitterness to  
joy,  
And cross to gold with glorious  
alchemy,  
Basing thy throne above the world's  
annoy.  
Reign thou above the storms of  
sorrow and ruth  
That roar beneath ; unshaken peace  
hath won thee ;  
So shall thou pierce the woven glooms  
of truth.  
So shall the blessing of the meek be on  
thee ;  
So in thine hour of dawn, the body's  
youth,  
An honourable old shall come upon  
thee.

## SONNET

SHALL the hag Evil die with child of  
Good,  
Or propagate again her loathéd kind,  
Thronging the cells of the diseaséd  
mind,  
Hateful with hanging cheeks, a  
withered brood,  
Though hourly pastured on the  
salient blood ?

Oh ! that the wind which bloweth  
cold or heat  
Would shatter and o'erbear the brazen  
beat  
Of their broad vans, and in the soli-  
tude  
Of middle space confound them, and  
blow back  
Their wild cries down their cavern  
throats, and slake  
With points of blast-borne hail their  
heated eyne !  
So their wan limbs no more might  
come between  
The moon and the moon's reflex in  
the night,  
Nor blot with floating shades the solar  
light.

## SONNET

THE pallid thunder-stricken sigh for  
gain,  
Down an ideal stream they ever float,  
And sailing on Pactolus in a boat,  
Drown soul and sense, while wistfully  
they strain  
Weak eyes upon the glistening sands  
that robe  
The understream. The wise, could  
he behold  
Cathedralled caverns of thick ribbéd  
gold  
And branching silvers of the central  
globe,  
Would marvel from so beautiful a  
sight  
How scorn and ruin, pain and hate  
could flow :  
But Hatred in a gold cave sits below ;  
Pleached with her hair, in mail of  
argent light  
Shot into gold, a snake her forehead  
clips,  
And skins the colour from her  
trembling lips.

## LOVE

## I

THOU, from the first, unborn, undying  
love,  
Albeit we gaze not on thy glories near,

## THE KRAKEN

Before the face of God didst breathe  
and move  
Though night and pain and ruin and  
death reign here.  
Thou foldest, like a golden atmos-  
phere,  
The very throne of the eternal God  
Passing through thee the edicts of his  
fear  
Are mellowed into music, borne abroad  
By the loud winds, though they up-  
rend the sea,  
Even from its central deeps thine  
empyre  
Is over all thou wilt not brook  
eclipse,  
Thou goest and returnest to His lips  
Like lightning thou dost ever brood  
above  
The silence of all hearts, unutterable  
Love.

## II

To know thee is all wisdom, and old  
age  
Is but to know thee dimly we behold  
thee  
Athwart the veils of evil which infold  
thee  
We beat upon our aching hearts in  
rage,  
We cry for thee, we deem the world  
thy tomb.  
As dwellers in lone planets look upon  
The mighty disk of their majestic sun,  
Hollowed in awful chasms of wheeling  
gloom,  
Making their day dim, so we gaze on  
thee  
Come, thou of many crowns, white-  
robed love,  
Oh! rend the veil in twain ' all men  
adore thee,  
Heaven crieth after thee; earth  
waitheth for thee  
Breathe on thy wingéd throne, and it  
shall move  
In music and in light o'er land and  
sea.

## III

And now—methinks I gaze upon thee  
now,  
As on a serpent in his agonies

Awe-stricken Indians, what time laid  
low  
And crushing the thick fragrant reeds  
he he,  
When the new year warm breathed on  
the earth,  
Waiting to light him with her purple  
skies  
Calls to him by the fountain to uprise  
Already with the pangs of a new birth  
Strain the hot spheres of his con-  
vulsed eye,  
And in his withings awful hues begin  
To wander down his sable-shaggy  
sides  
Like light on troubled waters, from  
within  
Anon he rusheth forth with mighty din,  
And in him light and joy and strength  
abides;  
And from his brows a crown of living  
light  
Looks through the thick-stemmed  
woods by day and night.

## THE KRAKEN

Blow the thunder of the upper  
deep,  
Far far beneath in the abyssal sea,  
His antient, dreamless, uninvaded  
sleep,  
The Kraken sleepeth faintest sun-  
light's flee  
About his shadowy sides above him  
swell  
Huge sponges of millennial growth  
and height,  
And far away into the sickly light,  
From many a wondrous grot and  
secret cell  
Unnumbered and enormous polypi  
Winnow with giant fins the slumber-  
ing green  
There hath he lain for ages and will  
he  
Battening upon huge seaworms in his  
sleep,  
Until the latter fire shall heat the  
deep,  
Then once by men and angels to be  
seen,  
In roaring he shall rise and on the  
surface die.

## ENGLISH WAR SONG

Who fears to die ? Who fears to die ?

Is there any here who fears to die ?  
He shall find what he fears ; and none  
shall grieve

For the man who fears to die ;  
But the withering scorn of the many  
shall cleave

To the man who fears to die.

*Chorus.*—Shout for England !  
Ho ! for England !  
George for England !  
Merry England !  
England for aye !

The hollow at heart shall crouch  
forlorn,  
Ho shall eat the bread of common  
scorn ;  
It shall be steeped in the salt, salt  
tear,  
Shall be steeped in his own salt  
tear :  
Far better, far better he never were  
born  
Than to shame merry England here.

*Chorus.*—Shout for England ! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy ;  
Hark ! he shouteth—the ancient  
enemy !  
On the ridge of the hill his banners  
rise ;

They stream like fire in the skies ;  
Hold up the Lion of England on high  
Till it dazzle and blind his eyes.

*Chorus.*—Shout for England ! etc.

Come along ! we alone of the earth  
are free ;  
The child in our cradles is bolder  
than he ;  
For where is the heart and strength  
of slaves ;  
Oh ! where is the strength of slaves ?  
He is weak ! we are strong ; he a slave,  
we are free ;  
Come along ! we will dig their graves.

*Chorus.*—Shout for England ! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy ;  
Will he dare to battle with the free ?  
Spur along ! spur amain ! charge to  
the fight :

Charge ! charge to the fight !  
Hold up the Lion of England on high !  
Shout for God and our right !

*Chorus.*—Shout for England ! etc.

## NATIONAL SONG

THERE is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no hearts like English  
hearts.

Such hearts of oak as they be.  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no men like Englishmen,  
So tall and bold as they be.

*Chorus.*—For the French the pope  
may shrive 'em,  
For the devil a whit we heed 'em :  
As for the French, God speed 'em  
Unto their heart's desire,  
And the merry devil drive 'em  
Through the water and the fire.

*Full chorus.*—Our glory is our  
freedom,  
We lord it o'er the sea ;  
We are the sons of freedom,  
We are free.

There is no land like England,  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no wives like English wives,  
So fair and chaste as they be.  
There is no land like England,  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no maidens like English maidens,  
So beautiful as they be.

*Chorus.*—For the French, etc.

## DUALISMS

Two foes within a chrystal flower-  
bell rockéd  
Hum a lovelay to the west wind  
at noon tide.

<p>Both alike, they buzz together Both alike, they hum together Through and through the flowered heather Where in a creeping cove the wave unshocked Lays itself calm and wide Over a stream two birds of glauncing feather Do woo each other, carolling together Both alike, they glide together Side by side Both alike, they sing together, Arching blueglossed necks beneath the purple weather Two children lovelier than Love adown the lea are singing, As they gambol, lily garlands ever stringing Both in bloomwhite silk are frocked Like unlike they roam together Under a summer vault of golden weather Like, unlike, they sing together Side by side Mid-May's darling golden locked, Summer's tanling diamond eyed</p>	<p>With mallow pictures, "We are free" The streams through many a hill flow Down-carolling to the cypred bough, Low twinkled with a bell like flow Atween the blossoms, "We are free"  of PÉOVRES I</p>
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## WE ARE FREE

THE winds as at their hour of birth,  
Leaning upon the ridged sea,  
Breath'd low around the rolling earth

There is no rest no calm no pause,  
Nor good nor ill, nor light nor  
shade,  
Nor essence nor eternal laws  
For nothing is, but all is melt  
But if I dream that all these are,  
They are to me for that I dream,  
For all things are as they seem to all,  
And all things flow like a stream  
Argl—this very opinion is only true rela-  
tively to the flowing philosophers

## POEMS

(1833)

## SONNET

MINE be the strength of spirit fierce  
and free,  
Like some broad river rushing down  
alone,  
With the selfsame impulse wherewith  
he was thrown  
From his loud fount upon the echoing  
lea —  
Which with increasing might doth  
forward flee

By town, and tower, and hill, and  
cape and Isle  
And in the middle of the green salt sea  
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many  
a mile,  
Mine be the Power which over to its  
sway  
Will win the wise at once, and by  
degrees  
May into uncongenial spirits flow,  
Even as the great gulfstream of  
Florida

Floats far away into the Northern  
seas  
The lavish growths of southern  
Mexico.

TO —

I

ALL good things have not kept aloof,  
Nor wandered into other ways :  
I have not lacked thy mild reproof,  
Nor golden largess of thy praise,  
But life is full of weary days.

II

Shake hands, my friend, across the  
brink  
Of that deep grave to which I go.  
Shake hands once more : I cannot  
sink  
So far—far down, but I shall know  
Thy voice, and answer from  
below.

When, in the darkness over me,  
The four-handed mole shall scrape,  
Plant thou no dusky cypress tree,  
Nor wreath the thy cap with doleful  
crape,  
But pledge me in the flowing  
grape.

IV

And when the sappy field and wood  
Grow green beneath the showery  
gray,  
And rugged barks begin to bud,  
And through damp holts, new-  
flushed with May,  
Ring sudden laughters of the Jay ;

V

Then let wise Nature work her will  
And on my clay her darnels grow.  
Come only, when the days are still,  
And at my headstone whisper low,  
And tell me if the woodbines blow,

VI

If thou art blest, my mother's smile  
Undimmed, if bees are on the  
wing :  
Then cease, my friend, a little while,  
That I may hear the throstle sing  
His bridal song, the boast of spring.

VII

Sweet as the noise in parched plains  
Of bubbling wells that fret the  
stones  
(If any sense in me remains)  
Thy words will be ; thy cheerful  
tones  
As welcome to my crumbling bones.

### BUONAPARTE

He thought to quell the stubborn  
hearts of oak,  
Madman !—to chain with chains,  
and bind with bands  
That island queen that sways the  
floods and lands  
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight  
woke,  
When from her wooden walls, lit by  
sure hands,  
With thunders, and with lightnings,  
and with smoke,  
Peal after peal, the British battle  
broke,  
Lulling the brine against the Coptic  
sands.  
We taught him lowlier moods, when  
Elsinore  
Heard the war moan along the  
distant sea,  
Rocking with shattered spars, with  
sudden fires  
Flamed over : at Trafalgar yet once  
more  
We taught him : late he learned  
humility  
Perforce, like those whom Gideon  
schooled with briars.

## SONNET

I

O BEAUTY, passing beauty! sweetest  
Sweet!  
How canst thou let me waste my  
youth in sighs?  
I only ask to sit beside thy feet  
Thou knowest I dare not look into  
thine eyes  
Might I but kiss thy hand! I dare  
not fold  
My arms about thee—scarcely dare  
to speak  
And nothing seems to me so wild  
and bold,  
As with one kiss to touch thy  
blessed cheek.  
Methinks if I should kiss thee, no  
control  
Within the thrilling brain could  
keep afloat  
The subtle spirit. Even while I  
spoke,  
The bare word kiss hath made my  
inner soul  
To tremble like a lute-string,  
ere the note  
Hath melted in the silence that  
it broke

## SONNET

II

BUT were I loved, as I desire to be,  
What is there in the great sphere of  
the earth,  
And range of evil between death and  
birth,  
That I should fear,—if I were loved  
by thee?  
All the inner, all the outer world of  
pain  
Clear Love would pierce and cleave,  
if thou wert mine,  
As I have heard that, somewhere in  
the main,  
Fresh-water-springs come up through  
bitter brine.  
'Twere joy, not fear, clasped hand-  
in-hand with thee,  
To wait for death—mute—careless  
of all ills,

Apart upon a mountain, though the  
surge  
Of some new deluge from a thousand  
hills  
I lung leagues of roaring foam into  
the gorge  
Below us, as far on as eye could see

## THE HESPERIDES

Hesperus and his daughter three,  
That sing about the golden tree

comes

THE North wind fall'n, in the new-  
starred night  
Zidonian Ilanno, voyaging beyond  
The hoary promontory of Soloe  
Past Thymaterton, in calmed bays,  
Between the southern and the western  
Horn  
Heard neither warbling of the night-  
ingale,  
Nor melody o' the Lybian lotus-flute  
Blown seaward from the shore, but  
from a slope  
That ran bloombright into the Atlan-  
tic blue,  
Beneath a highland leaning down a  
weight  
Of cliffs, and zoned below with  
cedar shade  
Came voices like the voices in a dream,  
Continuous, till he reached the outer  
sea.

## SONG

I

THE golden apple, the golden apple,  
the hallowed fruit  
Guard it well, guard it warily,  
Singing airily,  
Standing about the charm'd root.  
Round about all is mute,  
As the snowfield on the mountain  
peaks,  
As the sandfield at the mountain-  
foot  
Crocodiles in briny creeks  
Sleep and stir not all is mute.

If ye sing not, if ye make false  
measure,  
We shall lose eternal pleasure,  
Worth eternal want of rest.  
Laugh not loudly: watch the trea-  
sure  
Of the wisdom of the west.  
In a corner wisdom whispers. Five  
and three  
(Let it not be preached abroad) make  
an awful mystery.  
For the blossom unto threefold  
music bloweth;  
Evermore it is born anew;  
And the sap to threefold music  
floweth,  
From the root  
Drawn in the dark,  
Up to the fruit,  
Creeping under the fragrant bark,  
Liquid gold, honeysweet, thro' and  
thro'.  
Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,  
Looking warily  
Every way,  
Guard the apple night and day,  
Lest one from the East come and  
take it away.

## II

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch,  
watch, ever and aye,  
Looking under silver hair with a  
silver eye.  
Father, twinklo not thy stedfast  
sight;  
Kingdoms lapse, and climates change,  
and races die;  
Honour comes with mystery;  
Hoarded wisdom brings delight.  
Number, tell them over and number  
How many the mystic fruit tree  
holds,  
Lest the red-combed dragon slumber  
Rolled together in purple folds.  
Look to him, father, lest he wink, and  
the golden apple be stol'n away,  
For his ancient heart is drunk with  
overwatchings night and day,  
Round about the hallowed fruit tree  
curled—  
Sing away, sing aloud evermore in  
the wind, without stop,

Lest his scaled eyelid drop,  
For he is older than the world.  
If he waken, we waken,  
Rapidly levelling eager eyes.  
If he sleep, we sleep,  
Dropping the eyelid over the eyes.  
If the golden apple be taken  
The world will be overwise.  
Five links, a golden chain, are we,  
Hesper, the dragon, the sisters three,  
Bound about the golden tree.

## III

Father Hesper, Father Hesper,  
watch, watch, night and day,  
Lest the old wound of the world  
be healed,  
The glory unsealed,  
The golden apple stol'n away,  
And the ancient secret revealed.  
Look from west to east along:  
Father, old Ilimala weakens, Cau-  
casus is bold and strong.  
Wandering waters unto wandering  
waters call;  
Let them clash together, foam and  
fall.  
Out of watchings, out of wilcs,  
Comes the bliss of secret smiles.  
All things are not told to all.  
Half-round the manling night is  
drawn,  
Purple-fringed with evon and dawn.  
Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening  
hateth morn.

## IV

Every flower and every fruit the  
redolent breath  
Of this warm seawind ripeneth,  
Arching the billow in his sleep;  
But the landwind wandereth,  
Broken by the highland-steep,  
Two streams upon the violet deep:  
For the western sun and the western  
star,  
And the low west wind, breathing  
afar,  
The end of day and beginning of  
night  
Make the apple holy and bright;

Holy and bright, round and full,  
bright and blest,  
Mellowed in a land of rest;  
Watch it warily day and night;  
All good things are in the west.  
Till midnoon the cool east light  
Is shut out by the round of the tall  
hillbrow;  
But when the full-faced sunset  
yellowly  
Stays on the flowering arch of the  
bough,  
The luscious fruitage clustereth  
mellowly,  
Golden-kernelled, golden-cored,  
Sunset-ripened above on the tree.  
The world is wasted with fire and  
sword,  
But the apple of gold hangs over  
the sea.  
Five links, a golden chain, are we,  
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,  
Daughters three,  
Bound about  
All round about  
The gnarled bole of the charmed tree.  
The golden apple, the golden apple,  
the hallowed fruit,  
Guard it well, guard it warily,  
Watch it warily,  
Singing airily,  
Standing about the charmed root.

## SONG

Who can say  
Why To-day  
To-morrow will be yesterday?  
Who can tell  
Why to smell  
The violet, recalls the dewy prime  
Of youth and buried time?  
The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

## KATE

I KNOW her by her angry air,  
Her bright black eyes, her bright-  
black hair,  
Her rapid laughter wild and  
shrill,  
As daughters of the woodpecker  
From the bosom of a hill.  
'Tis Kate—she sayeth what she  
will:

For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,  
Clear as the twanging of a harp.  
Her heart is like a throbbing  
star.  
Kate hath a spirit ever strong  
Like a new bow, and bright and  
sharp  
As edges of the scymetar.  
Whence shall she take a fitting  
mate?  
For Kate no common love will  
feel:  
My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,  
As pure and true as blades of  
steel.  
Kate saith "the world is void of  
night."  
Kate saith "the men are gilded  
flies."  
Kate snaps her fingers at my  
vows;  
Kate will not hear of lover's sighs,  
I would I were an arm'd knight,  
Far-famed for well-won enter-  
prise,  
And wearing on my swarthy  
brows  
The garland of new-wreathed  
enterprise;  
For in a moment I would pierce  
The blackest files of changing fight,  
And strongly strike to left and right,  
In dreaming of my lady's eyes,  
Oh! Kate loves well the bold  
and fierce;  
But none are bold enough for Kate,  
She cannot find a fitting mate.

## ROSALIND

1

MY Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,  
Whose free delight, from any height  
of rapid flight,  
Stoops at all game that wing the  
skies,  
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon,  
whither,  
Careless both of wind and weather,  
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,  
Up or down the streaming wind?

## II

The quick lark's closest-carolled strains,  
 The shadow rushing up the sea,  
 The lightning flash betwix the rains,  
 The sunlight driving down the lea,  
 The leaping stream, the very wind,  
 That will not stay, upon his way,  
 To stoop the cowslip to the plains,  
 Is not so clear and bold and free  
 As you, my falcon Rosalind.  
 You care not for another's pains,  
 Because you are the soul of joy,  
 Bright metal all without alloy.  
 Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,  
 And flashes off a thousand ways,  
 Through lips and eyes in subtle rays.  
 Your hawkeyes are keen and bright,  
 Keen with triumph, watching still  
 To pierce me through with pointed light;

But oftentimes they flash and glitter  
 Like sunshine on a dancing rill,  
 And your words are seeming-bitter,  
 Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter  
 From excess of swift delight.

## III

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,  
 My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :  
 Too long you keep the upper skies ;  
 Too long you roam and wheel at will ;  
 But we must hood your random eyes,

That care not whom they kill,  
 And your cheek, whose brilliant hue  
 Is so sparkling-fresh to view,  
 Some red heathflower in the dew,  
 Touched with sunrise. We must bind  
 And keep you fast, my Rosalind,  
 Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,  
 And clip your wings, and make you love ;  
 When we have lured you from above,  
 And that delight of frolic flight, by day or night,  
 From North to South ;  
 We'll bind you fast in silken cords,  
 And kiss away the bitter words  
 From off your rosy mouth.<sup>1</sup>

## SONNET

## WRITTEN ON HEARING OF THE OUT-BREAK OF THE POLISH INSURRECTION

Blow ye the trumpet, gather from afar  
 The hosts to battle : be not bought and sold,  
 Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the bold ;  
 Break through your iron shackles—  
 fling them far.  
 O for those days of Piast, ere the Czar  
 Grew to this strength among his deserts cold ;  
 When even to Moscow's cupolas were rolled

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the following lines may be allowed to stand as a separate poem; originally they made part of the text, where they were manifestly superfluous.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 Bold, subtle, careless Rosalind,  
 Is one of those who know no strife  
 Of inward woo or outward fear ;  
 To whom the slope and stream of life,  
 The life before, the life behind,  
 In the ear, from far and near,  
 Chimeth musically clear.  
 My falcon-hearted Rosalind,  
 Full sailed before a vigorous wind,  
 Is one of those, who cannot weep  
 For others' woes, but overtop  
 All the pity shocks and fears  
 That trouble life in early years,  
 With a flash of frolic scorn

And keen delight, that never falls  
 Away from freshness, self-upborne  
 With such gladness as, whenever  
 The fresh-flushing springtime calls  
 To the flooding waters cool,  
 Young fishes, on an April morn,  
 Up and down a rapid river,  
 Leap the little waterfalls  
 That sing into the pebbled pool.  
 My happy falcon, Rosalind,  
 Hath during fancies of her own,  
 Fresh as the dawn before the day,  
 Fresh as the early seas-mell blown  
 Through vineyards from an inland bay.  
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 Because no shadow on you falls  
 Think you hearts are tennis balls,  
 To play with, wanton Rosalind ?

## SONNET—O DARLING ROOM

The growing murmurs of the Polish  
war !  
Now must your noble anger blaze out  
more  
Than when from Sobieski, clan by  
clan,  
The Moslem myriads fell, and fled  
before—  
Than when Zamoysky smote the  
Tatar Khan ;  
Than earlier, when on the Baltic  
shore  
Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

## SONNET

ON THE RESULT OF THE LATE RUSSIAN  
INVASION OF POLAND

How long, O God, shall men be  
ridden down,  
And trampled under by the last and  
least  
Of men ? The heart of Poland hath  
not ceased  
To quiver, though her sacred blood  
doth drown  
The fields ; and out of every smoul-  
dering town  
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be  
increased,  
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the  
East  
Trangess his ample bound to some  
new crown :—  
Cries to Thee, " Lord, how long shall  
these things be ?  
How long shall the icy-hearted Musco-  
vite  
Oppress the region ? " Us, O Just  
and Good,  
Forgive, who smiled when she was  
torn in three ;  
Us, who stand *now*, when we should  
aid the right—  
A matter to be wept with tears of  
blood !

## SONNET

As when with downcast eyes we muse  
and brood,  
And ebb into a former life, or seem

To lapse far back in a confused  
dream  
To states of mystical similitude ;  
If one but speaks or hums or stirs  
his chair,  
Ever the wonder waxeth more and  
more,  
So that we say, " All this hath been  
before,  
All this *hath* been, I know not when  
or where."  
So, friend, when first I looked upon  
your face,  
Our thought gave answer, each to  
each, so true,  
Opposèd mirrors each reflecting  
each—  
Altho' I knew not in what time or  
place,  
Methought that I had often met with  
you,  
And each had lived in the other's  
mind and speech.

## O DARLING ROOM

I

O DARLING room, my heart's delight,  
Dear room, the apple of my sight,  
With thy two couches soft and  
white,  
There is no room so exquisite,  
No little room so warm and bright  
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

II

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,  
And Oberwinter's vineyards green,  
Musical Larlei ; and between  
The hills to Bingen have I been,  
Bingen in Darmstadt, where the  
Rheno  
Curves toward Mentz, a woody scene.

III

Yet never did there meet my sight,  
In any town, to left or right,  
A little room so exquisite,  
With two such couches, soft and  
white ;  
Not any room so warm and bright,  
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH  
 You did late review my lays,  
 Crusty Christopher ;  
 You did mingle blame and praise,  
 Rusty Christopher.

When I learnt from whom it came,  
 I forgave you all the blame,  
 Musty Christopher ;  
 I could *not* forgive the praise,  
 Fusty Christopher.

## POEMS

(1842)

## TO THE QUEEN

REVERED, beloved—O you that hold  
 A nobler office upon earth  
 Than arms, or power of brain, or  
 birth  
 Could give the warrior kings of old,  
 Victoria,—since your Royal grace  
 To one of less desert allows  
 This laurel greener from the brows  
 Of him that utier'd nothing base ;  
 And should your greatness, and the  
 care  
 That yokes with empire, yield you  
 time  
 To make demand of modern rhyme  
 If aught of ancient worth be there ;  
 Then—while a sweeter music wakes,  
 And thro' wild March the throstle  
 calls,  
 Where all about your palace-walls  
 The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—  
 Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;  
 For tho' the faults were thick as  
 dust  
 In vacant chambers, I could trust  
 Your kindness. May you rule us  
 long,  
 And leave us rulers of your blood  
 As noble till the latest day !  
 May children of our children say,  
 "She wrought her people lasting  
 good ;  
 "Her court was pure ; her life serene ;  
 God gave her peace ; her land  
 repos'd ;  
 A thousand claims to reverence  
 closed  
 In her as Mother, Wife and Queen ;

" And statesmen at her council met  
 Who knew the seasons when to take  
 Occasion by the hand, and make  
 The bounds of freedom wider yet

" By shaping some august decree,  
 Which kept her throne unshaken  
 still,  
 Broad-based upon her people's will,  
 And compass'd by the inviolate sea.."

## CLARIBEL

## A MELODY

I

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
 The breezes pause and die,  
 Letting the rose-leaves fall :  
 But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
 Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
 With an ancient melody  
 Of an inward agony,  
 Where Claribel low-lieth.

II

At eve the beetle boometh  
 Athwart the thicket lone :  
 At noon the wild bee hummeth  
 About the moss'd headstone :  
 At midnight the moon cometh,  
 Ard looketh down alone.  
 Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
 The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
 The callow throstle lispeith,  
 The slumbrous wave outwelletth,  
 The babbling runnel crispeith,  
 The hollow grot repleith  
 Where Claribel low-lieth.

## LILIAN—ISABEL

## LILIAN

## I

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
When I ask her if she love me,  
Claps her tiny hands above me,  
Laughing all she can ;  
She'll not tell me if she love me,  
Cruel little Lilian.

## II

When my passion seeks  
Pleasance in love-sighs  
She, looking thro' and thro' me  
Thoroughly to undo me,  
Smiling, never speaks :  
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,  
From beneath her gather'd wimple  
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
Till the lightning laughters dimple  
The baby-roses in her cheeks ;  
Then away she flies.

## III

Prythee weep, May Lilian !  
Gaiety without eclipse  
Wearieth me, May Lilian :  
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth  
When from crimson-threaded lips  
Silver-treble laughter trilleth :  
Prythee weep, May Lilian.

## IV

Praying all I can,  
If prayers will not hush thee,  
Airy Lilian,  
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
Fairy Lilian.

## ISABEL

## I

EYES not down-dropt nor over-  
bright, but fed  
With the clear-pointed flame of  
chastity,  
Clear, without heat, undying,  
tended by  
Pure vestal thoughts in the  
translucent fane  
Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-  
dicspread,  
Madonna-wise on either side her  
head :

Sweet lips whereon perpetually  
did reign  
The summer calm of golden charity,  
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed  
mood,  
Revered Isabel, the crown and  
head,  
The stately flower of female fortitude,  
Of perfect wifehood and pure  
lowliehead.

## II

The intuitive decision of a bright  
And thorough-edged intellect to  
part  
Error from crime ; a prudence to  
withhold ;  
The laws of marriage charac-  
ter'd in gold  
Upon the blanched tablets of her  
heart ;  
A love still burning upward, giving  
light  
To read those laws ; an accent very  
low  
In blandishment, but a most silver  
flow  
Of subtle-paced counsel in dis-  
tress,  
Right to the heart and brain, tho'  
undescried,  
Winning its way with extreme  
gentleness  
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious  
pride ;  
A courage to endure and to obey ;  
A hate of gossip parlance, and of  
sway,  
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid  
life,  
The queen of marriage, a most per-  
fect wife.

## III

The mellow'd reflex of a winter  
moon ;  
A clear stream flowing with a muddy  
one,  
Till in its onward current it  
absorbs  
With swifter movement and in  
purer light  
The vexed eddies of its way-  
ward brother :

A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
Clothing the stem, which else  
had fallen quite,  
With cluster'd flower-bells and  
ambrosial orbs  
Of rich fruit-bunches leaning  
on each other—  
Shadow forth thee :—the  
world hath not another  
(Though all her fairest forms are  
types of thee,  
And thou of God in thy great  
charity)  
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

## MARIANA

*"Marianna in the moated grange."—Measure for Measure.*

With blackest moss the flower-plots  
Were thickly crusted, one and all :  
The rusted nails fell from the knots  
That held the peach to the garden-wall.  
The broken sheds look'd sad and  
strange :  
Unlifted was the clinking latch ;  
Weeded and worn the ancient  
thatch  
Upon the lonely moated grange,  
She only said, " My life is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead ! "

Her tears fell with the dews at even :  
Her tears fell ere the dews were  
dried ;  
She could not look on the sweet  
heaven,  
Either at morn or eventide.  
After the flitting of the bats,  
When thickest dark did trance the  
sky,  
She drew her casement-curtain by,  
And glanced athwart the glooming  
flats.  
She only said, " The night is  
dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead ! "

Upon the middle of the night,  
Walking she heard the night-fowl  
crow :  
The cock sung out an hour ere light :  
From the dark fen the oxen's low  
Came to her : without hope of change,  
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed  
morn  
About the lonely moated grange.  
She only said, " The day is  
dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead ! "

About a stone-cast from the wall  
A sluice with blacken'd waters  
slept,  
And o'er it many, round and small,  
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.  
Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
All silver-green with gnarled bark :  
For leagues no other tree did mark  
The level waste, the rounding gray.  
She only said, " My life is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead ! "

And ever when the moon was low,  
And the shrill winds were up and  
away,  
In the white curtain, to and fro,  
She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
But when the moon was very low,  
And wild winds bound within their  
cell,  
The shadow of the poplar fell  
Upon her bed, across her brow.  
She only said, " The night is  
dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead ! "

All day within the dreamy house,  
The doors upon their hinges  
creak'd ;  
The blue fly sung in the pane ; the  
mouse  
Behind the smouldering wainscot  
shriek'd,  
Or from the crevice peer'd about.

## MADELINE

Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
Old voices called her from without.  
She only said, " My life is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead ! "

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
The slow clock ticking, and the  
sound  
Which to the wooping wind aloof  
The poplar made, did all confound  
Her sense ; but most she loathed the  
hour  
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
Athwart the chambers, and the  
day  
Was sloping toward his western bower.  
Then, said she, " I am very  
dreary,  
He will not come," she said ;  
She wept, " I am aweary,  
aweary,  
Oh God, that I were dead ! "

Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant  
swords  
Can do away that ancient lie ;  
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning  
words.

## IX

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,  
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost  
need,  
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
Until she be an athletic bold,  
And weary with a finger's touch  
Those writhed limbs of lightning  
speed ;  
Like that strange angel which of  
old,  
Until the breaking of the light,  
Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
Past Yabbok brook the livelong  
night,  
And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
In the dim tract of Penuel.

## TO —

## I

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful  
scorn,  
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts  
atwain  
The knots that tangle human  
creeds,  
The wounding cords that bind and  
strain  
The heart until it bleeds,  
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
Roof not a glance so keen as  
thine :  
If aught of prophecy be mine,  
Thou wilt not live in vain.

## II

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;  
Falsehood shall bare her plaited  
brow :  
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not  
now  
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.

MADELINE

I

THOU art not steep'd in golden  
languors,  
No tranced summer calm is thine,  
Ever varying Madeline.  
Thro' light and shadow thou dost  
range,  
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
Delicious spites and darling angers,  
And airy forms of flitting change.

## II

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
Revealings deep and clear are thine  
Of wealthy smiles : but who may  
know  
Whether smile or frown be sweeter ?  
Whether smile or frown be fitter ?  
Who may know ?  
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
Light-glooming over eyes divine,  
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are  
thine,  
Ever varying Madeline.

Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
From one another,  
Each to each is dearest brother;  
Hues of the silken sheeny woof  
Momently shot into each other.  
All the mystery is thine;  
Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore,  
Ever varying Madeline.

## III

A subtle, sudden flame,  
By veering passion fann'd,  
About thee breaks and dances;  
When I would kiss thy hand,  
The flush of anger'd shame  
O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown:  
But when I turn away,  
Thou, willing me to stay,  
Woocest not, nor vainly wranglest;  
But, looking fixedly the while,  
All my bounding heart entanglest  
In a golden-netted smile;  
Then in madness and in bliss,  
If my lips should dare to kiss  
Thy taper fingers amorously,  
Again thou blushest angrily;  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown.

## SONG.—THE OWL

## I

WHEN cats run home and light is  
come,  
And dew is cold upon the ground,  
And the far-off stream is dumb,  
And the whirring sail goes round,  
And the whirring sail goes round:  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

## II

When merry milkmaids click the  
latch,  
And rarely smells the new-mown  
hay,  
And the cock hath sung beneath the  
thatch

Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

## SECOND SONG

## TO THE SAME

## I

Tuwhits are lull'd I wot,  
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
Which upon the dark afloat,  
So took echo with delight,  
So took echo with delight,  
That her voice untroubled grown,  
Wears all day a fainter tone.

## II

I would mock thy chaunt anew;  
But I cannot mimick it;  
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tu-  
whoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE  
ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn  
blew free  
In the silken sail of infancy,  
The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
The forward-flowing tide of time;  
And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
High-walled gardens green and old;  
True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and  
clove  
The citron-shadows in the blue:  
By garden porches on the brim,  
The costly doors flung open wide,

Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
And broider'd sofas on each side :

In sooth it was a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans  
guard

The outlet, did I turn away  
The boat-head down a broad canal  
From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moon-lit sward  
Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unmown, which  
crept

Adown to where the water slept.  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallow thro' the star-strown calm,  
Until another night in night  
I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they  
clomb

Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the  
dome  
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rilles musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low  
Down from the central fountain's  
flow

Fall'n silver-chiming, seem'd to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vary-colour'd shells  
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge  
From fluted vase, and brazen urn  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells

Half-closed, and others studded wide  
With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odour in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;  
Not he ; but something which pos-  
sess'd

The darkness of the world, delight,  
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,  
Apart from place, withholding  
time,  
But flattering the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Back the garden-bowers and grots  
Slumber'd : the golden palms were  
ranged  
Above, unwo'd of summer wind :  
A sudden splendour from behind  
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-  
green,

And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew darker from that under-flame :  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
Entranced with that place and  
time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was  
drawn—  
A realm of pleasure, many a mound,  
And many a shadow-choquer'd lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing  
round  
The stately cedar, tamarisks,

Thick roses of scented thorn,  
Fall orient shrubs and obelisks  
Graven with emblems of the time  
In honour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alaschid

With dazed vision unawares  
From the long alloy's latticed shade  
Emerald, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat  
Right to the cavern cedar doors,  
I lung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
After the fashion of the time,  
And humour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alaschid.

The fourscore windows all aight  
As with the quintessence of flame,  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers look'd to shame  
The hollow vaulted dark, and  
sticam'd  
Upon the mooned domes aloof  
In utmost Bagdad, till there seem'd  
Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
Of night new-risen, that marvel-  
lous time,  
To celebrate the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alaschid

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
Gird on the Persian gird alone,  
Seene with aigent-hidde eyes  
Amorous, and lashes like to rays,  
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
Tressed with redolent ebony,  
In many a dark delicious curl,  
Flowing beneath her rose hued zone,  
The sweetest lady of the time,  
Will worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alaschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
Pur silver, underpopt a rich  
Throne of the massive ore, from which  
Down-hoop'd, in many a floating  
fold,  
Engallanded and diaper'd  
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of  
gold  
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stud'd

With merriment of kingly pride,  
Sole star of all that place and time,  
I saw him—in his golden prime,  
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID !

## ODE TO MEMORY

## I

Thou who stealest fire,  
From the fountains of the past,  
To glorify the present, oh, haste,  
Visit my low desire !  
Strengthen me, enlighten me !  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## II

Come not as thou camest of late,  
Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
On the white day, but robed in  
soften'd light  
Of orient state  
Whilome thou camest with the morn-  
ing mist,  
Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
The dew impearled winds of dawn  
have kiss'd,  
When she, as thou,  
Stays on her floating locks the lovely  
fright  
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest  
shoots  
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of  
fruits,  
Which in winter tide shall star  
The black earth with brilliance rare

## III

Whilome thou camest with the morn-  
ing mist,  
And with the evening cloud  
Showeing thy gleaned wealth into  
my open breast,  
(Those peerless flowers which in the  
rudest wind  
Never grow seic  
When rooted in the garden of the  
mind,  
Because they are the earliest of the  
year)  
Nor was the night thy shroud.

## ODE TO MEMORY

In sweet dreams softer than unbroken  
rest  
Thou leddest by the hand thine infant  
Hope.  
The eddying of her garments caught  
from thee  
The light of thy great presence; and  
the cope  
Of the half-aitain'd futurity,  
Tho' deep not fathomless,  
Was cloven with the million stars  
which tremble  
O'er the deep mind of dauntless  
infancy.  
Small thought was there of life's dis-  
tress;  
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth  
could dull  
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and  
beautiful:  
Sure she was nigher to heaven's  
spheres,  
Listening the lordly music flowing  
from  
The illimitable years.  
O strengthen me, enlighton me!  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## IV

Come forth I charge thee, arise,  
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad  
eyes!  
Thou comest not with shows of  
flaunting vines  
Unto mine inner eye,  
Divinest Memory!  
Thou wert not nursed by the water-  
fall  
Which ever sounds and shines  
A pillar of white light upon the wall  
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:  
Come from the woods that belt the  
gray hill-side,  
The seven elms, the poplars four  
That stand beside my father's door,  
And chiefly from the brook that loves  
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed  
sand,  
Or dimple in the dark of rushy  
coves,  
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,  
In every elbow and turn,

The filter'd tribute of the rough wood-  
land.  
O! hither lead thy feet!  
Pour round mine ears the livelong  
bleat  
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from  
wattled folds,  
Upon the ridged wolds,  
When the first matin-song hath  
waken'd loud  
Ovor the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
What time the amber morn  
Forth gushes from beneath a low-  
hung cloud.

## V

Large dowries doth the raptured eye  
To the young spirit present  
When first she is wed;  
And like a bride of old  
In triumph led,  
With music and sweet showers  
Of festal flowers,  
Unto the dwelling she must sway,  
Well hast thou done, great artist  
Memory,  
In setting round thy first exper-  
iment  
With royal frame-work of  
wrought gold;  
Needs must thou dearly love thy  
first essay,  
And foremost in thy various gallery  
Place it, where sweetest sunlight  
falls  
Upon the storied walls;  
For the discovery  
And newness of thine art so pleased  
thee,  
That all which thou hast drawn  
fairest  
Or boldest since, but lightly  
weighs  
With thee unto the love thou bearest  
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-  
like,  
Ever retiring thou dost gaze  
On the prime labour of thine early  
days:  
No matter what the sketch might be;  
Whether the high field on the bushless  
Pike,  
Or even a sand-built ridge  
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,

Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
Or even a lowly cottage whence we  
see  
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste  
enormous marsh,  
Where from the frequent budge,  
Like emblems of infinity,  
The trenched waters run from sky to  
sky,  
Or a garden bower'd close  
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,  
Long alleys falling down to twilight  
grots,  
Or opening upon level plots  
Of crowned bines, standing near  
Purple-spiked lavender  
Whither in after life retired  
From brawling storms,  
From weary wind,  
With youthful fancy reinspired,  
We may hold converse with all forms  
Of the many-sided mind,  
And those whom passion hath not  
blinded,  
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.  
My friend, with you to live alone,  
Were how much better than to own  
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!  
O strengthen me, enlighten me!  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## SONG

## I

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours  
Dwelling amid these yellowing  
bowers,

To himself he talks;  
For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
At his work you may hear him sob  
and sigh  
In the walks;  
Earthward he boweth the heavy  
stalks  
Of the mouldering flowers.  
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
Over its grave i' the earth so  
chilly.  
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and  
close,  
As a sick man's room when he taketh  
repose  
An hour before death.  
My very heart faints and my whole  
soul grieves  
At the moist rich smell of the rotting  
leaves,  
And the breath  
Of the fading edges of box be-  
neath,  
And the year's last rose.  
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
Over its grave i' the earth so  
chilly;  
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## ADELINE

## I

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
Faintly smiling Adchne,  
Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
But beyond expression fair  
With thy floating flaxen hair,  
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
Take the heart from out my  
breast  
Wherefore those dim looks of thine  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## II

Whence that aery bloom of thine,  
Like a lily which the sun  
Looks thro' in his sad decline,  
And a rose-bush leans upon,  
Thou that faintly smilest still,  
As a Nauad in a well,  
Looking at the set of day,  
Or a phantom two hours old  
Of a maiden past away,  
Ere the placid lips be cold?  
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline?

## III

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?  
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?  
 For sure thou art not all alone :  
     Do beating hearts of salient  
     springs  
 Keep measure with thine own ?  
     Hast thou heard the butterflies  
 What they say betwixt their  
     wings ?  
 Or in stillest evenings  
 With what voice the violet woos  
 To his heart the silver dews ?  
 Or when little airs arise,  
     How the merry bluebell rings  
 To the mosses underneath ?  
     Hast thou look'd upon the  
     breath  
 Of the lilies at sunrise ?  
 Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

## IV

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
 Some spirit of a crimson rose  
 In love with thee forgets to clos  
 His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
 All night long on darkness blind.  
 What aileth thee ? whom waitest  
     thou  
 With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,  
 And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
 Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

## V

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
 When thou gazest at the skies ?  
 Doth the low-tongued Orient  
 Wander from the side of the  
     morn,  
 Dripping with Sabæan spice  
 On thy pillow, lowly bent  
 With melodious airs love-lorn,  
 Breathing Light against thy face,  
 While his locks a-dropping twined  
     Round thy neck in subtle ring  
 Make a carcanet of rays,  
     And ye talk together still,  
 In the language wherewith  
     Spring  
 Letters cowslips on the hill ?  
 Hence that look and smile of thine,  
 Spiritual Adeline.

## A CHARACTER

With a half-glance upon the sky  
 At night he said, " The wanderings  
 Of this most intricate Universe  
 Teach me the nothingness of things."  
 Yet could not all creation pierce  
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull  
 Saw no divinity in grass,  
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;  
 Then looking as 'twere in a glass,  
 He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his  
     hair,  
 And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods  
 More purely, when they wish to charm  
 Pallas and Juno sitting by :  
 And with a sweeping of the arm,  
 And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
 Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour  
 He canvass'd human mysteries,  
 And trod on silk, as if the winds  
 Blow his own praises in his eyes,  
 And stood aloof from other minds  
 In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
 Himself unto himself he sold :  
 Upon himself himself did feed :  
 Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
 And other than his form of creed,  
 With chisell'd features clear and  
     sleek.

## THE POET

The poet in a golden clime was born,  
 With golden stars above ;  
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the  
     scorn of scorn,  
     The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro'  
     good and ill,  
 He saw thro' his own soul,  
 The marvel of the everlasting will,  
     An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded	There was no blood upon her maiden robes Sunn'd by those orient skies ; But round about the circles of the globes Of her keen eyes.
The secretest walks of fame : The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed	And wing'd with flame,
Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue, And of so fierce a flight, From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung, Filling with light	And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame WISDOM, a name to shake All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.
And vagrant melodies the winds which bore Then earthward till they lit ; Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower, The fruitful wit	And when she spake,
Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew Where'er they fell, behold, Like to the mother plant in semi- blance, grew A flower all gold,	Her words did gather thunder as they ran, And as the lightning to the thunder Which follows it, riving the spirit of man, Making earth wonder,
And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling The winged shafts of truth, To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring Of Hope and Youth.	So was their meaning to her words. No sword Of wrath her right arm whirl'd, But one poor poet's scroll, and with his word She shook the world.
So many minds did gird their orbs with beams, Tho' one did fling the fire. Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams Of high desire.	THE POET'S MIND I Vex not thou the poet's mind With thy shallow wit : Vex not thou the poet's mind ; For thou canst not fathom it. Clear and bright it should be ever, Flowing like a crystal river ; Bright as light, and clear as wind.
Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world Like one great garden show'd, And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd, Rare sunrise flow'd.	II Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear ; All the place is holy ground ; Hollow smile and frozen sneer Come not here. Holy water will I pour
And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise Her beautiful bold brow, Whon rites and forms before his burning eyes Melted like snow.	Into every spicy flower Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around. The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.

In your eye there is death,  
There is frost in your breath  
Which would blight the plants.  
Where you stand you cannot  
hear  
From the groves within  
The wild-bird's din.  
In the heart of the garden the merry  
bird chants,  
It would fall to the ground if you  
came in.  
In the middle leaps a fountain  
Like sheet lightning,  
Ever brightening  
With a low melodious thunder ;  
All day and all night it is ever drawn  
From the brain of the purple  
mountain  
Which stands in the distance  
yonder :  
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,  
And the mountain draws it from  
Heaven above,  
And it sings a song of undying love ;  
And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and  
full,  
You never would hear it ; your ears  
are so dull ;  
So keep where you are : you are foul  
with sin ;  
It would shrink to the earth if you  
came in.

## THE SEA-FAIRIES

Slow sail'd the weary mariners and  
saw,  
Betwixt the green brink and the  
running foam,  
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and  
bosoms prest  
To little harps of gold ; and while  
they mused,  
Whispering to each other half in  
fear,  
Shrill music reach'd them on the  
middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither  
away ? fly no more.

Whither away from the high green  
field, and the happy blossoming  
shore ?  
Day and night to the billow the  
fountain calls ;  
Down shower the gambolling water-  
falls  
From wandering over the lea :  
Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
They freshen the silvery-crimson  
shells,  
And thick with white bells the clover-  
hill swells  
High over the full-toned sea :  
O hither, come hither and furl your  
sails,  
Come hither to me and to me :  
Hither, come hither and frolic and  
play ;  
Here it is only the mew that wails ;  
We will sing to you all the day :  
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
For here are the blissful dawns and  
dales,  
And merrily merrily carol the gales,  
And the spangle dances in bight and  
bay,  
And the rainbow forms and flies on  
the land  
Over the islands free :  
And the rainbow lives in the curve of  
the sand ;  
Hither, come hither and see ;  
And the rainbow hangs on the poising  
wave,  
And sweet is the colour of cove and  
cave,  
And sweet shall your welcome be :  
O hither, come hither, and be our  
lords  
For merry brides are we :  
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak  
sweet words :  
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
With pleasure and love and jubilee :  
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
When the sharp clear twang of the  
golden chords  
Runs up the ridged sea.  
Who can light on as happy a shore  
All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?  
Whither away ? listen and stay :  
mariner, mariner, fly no more.

## THE DESERTED HOUSE

I

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
 Side by side,  
 Leaving door and windows  
 wide;  
 Careless tenants they!

II

All within is dark as night:  
 In the windows is no light;  
 And no murmur at the door,  
 So frequent on its hinge before.

III

Close the door, the shutters close,  
 Or thro' the windows we shall see  
 The nakedness and vacancy  
 Of the dark deserted house.

IV

Come away: no more of mirth  
 Is here or merry-making sound.  
 The house was builded of the earth,  
 And shall fall again to ground.

V

Come away: for Life and Thought  
 Here no longer dwell;  
 But in a city glorious—  
 A great and distant city—have  
 bought  
 A mansion incorruptible.  
 Would they could have stayed  
 with us!

## THE DYING SWAN

I

The plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
 Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
 Which had built up everywhere  
 An under-roof of doleful gray.  
 With an inner voice the river ran,  
 Adown it floated a dying swan,  
 And loudly did lament.  
 It was the middle of the day.

Ever the weary wind went on,  
 And took the reed-tops as it  
 went.

II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
 And white against the cold-white sky,  
 Shone out their crowning snow.  
 One willow over the river wept,  
 And shook the wave as the wind did  
 sigh;

Above in the wind was the swallow,  
 Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
 And far thro' the marish green and  
 still

The tangled water-courses slept,  
 Shot over with purple, and green, and  
 yellow.

III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the  
 soul

Of that waste place with joy  
 Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear  
 The warble was low, and full and  
 clear;  
 And floating about the under-sky,  
 Prevailing in weakness, the coronach  
 stole

Sometimes afar, and sometimes  
 anear;

But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
 With a music strange and manifold,  
 Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold:  
 As when a mighty people rejoice  
 With shawms, and with cymbals, and  
 harps of gold,

And the tumult of their acclaim is  
 roll'd

Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
 To the shepherd who watcheth the  
 evening star.

And the creeping mosses and clam-  
 bering weeds,  
 And the willow-branches hoar and  
 dank,

And the wavy swell of the southing  
 reeds,

And the wave-worn horns of the  
 echoing bank,

And the silvery marish-flowers that  
 throng

The desolate creeks and pools among,

Were flooded over with eddying song.

## A DIRGE

I

Now is done thy long day's work ;  
 Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
 Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.  
 Let them rave.

Shadow of the silver birk  
 Sweep the green that folds thy grave.  
 Let them rave.

II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;  
 Nothing but the small cold worm  
 Fretteth thine enshrouded form.  
 Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander  
 O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
 Let them rave.

III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;  
 Chaunteth not the brooding bee  
 Sweeter tones than calumny ?  
 Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head  
 From the green that folds thy grave.  
 Let them rave.

IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;  
 The woodbine and eglatere  
 Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.  
 Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree  
 O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
 Let them rave.

V

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,  
 Bramble-roses, faint and pale,  
 And long purples of the dale.  
 Let them rave.

These in every shower creep  
 Thro' the green that folds thy grave.  
 Let them rave.

VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;  
 The frail bluebell peereth over

Rare broidry of the purple clover.  
 Let them rave.  
 Kings have no such couch as thine,  
 As the green that folds thy grave.  
 Let them rave.

VII

Wild words wander here and there ;  
 God's great gift of speech abused  
 Makes thy memory confused :  
 But let them rave.  
 The balm-cricket carols clear  
 In the green that folds thy grave.  
 Let them rave.

## LOVE AND DEATH

WHAT time the mighty moon was  
 gathering light  
 Love paced the thymy plots of  
 Paradise,  
 And all about him roll'd his lustrous  
 eyes ;  
 When, turning round a cassia, full in  
 view  
 Death, walking all alone beneath a  
 yew,  
 And talking to himself, first met his  
 sight :  
 " You must begone," said Death,  
 " these walks are mine."  
 Love wept and spread his sheeny vans  
 for flight ;  
 Yet ere he parted said, " This hour is  
 thine :  
 Thou art the shadow of life, and as the  
 tree  
 Stands in the sun and shadows all  
 beneath,  
 So in the light of great eternity  
 Life eminent creates the shade of  
 death ;  
 The shadow passeth when the tree  
 shall fall,  
 But I shall reign for ever over all."

## THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

My heart is wasted with my woo,  
 Oriana.  
 There is no rest for me below,  
 Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd  
with snow,  
And loud the Norland whirlwinds  
blow,  
Oriana,  
Alone I wander to and fro,  
Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,  
Oriana,  
At midnight the cock was crowing,  
Oriana;  
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
We heard the steeds to battle going,  
Oriana;  
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,  
Oriana,  
Ere I rode into the fight,  
Oriana,  
While blissful tears blinded my sight  
By star-shine and by moonlight,  
Oriana,  
I to thee my troth did plight,  
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,  
Oriana;  
She watch'd my crest among them all,  
Oriana;  
She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
When forth there stept a foeman tall,  
Oriana,  
Atween me and the casle wall,  
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,  
Oriana;  
The false, false arrow went aside,  
Oriana;  
The damned arrow glanced aside,  
And pierced thy heart, my love, my  
bride,  
Oriana!  
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
Oriana!

Oh! narrow, narrow was the space,  
Oriana,  
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,

Oriana.  
Oh! deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
The battle deepen'd in its place,  
Oriana;  
But I was down upon my face,  
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where  
I lay,  
Oriana!  
How could I rise and come away,  
Oriana?  
How could I look upon the day?  
They should have stabb'd me where I  
lay,  
Oriana—  
They should have trod me into clay,  
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,  
Oriana!  
O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
Oriana!  
Thou smilest, but thou dost not  
speak,  
And then the tears run down my  
cheek,  
Oriana:  
What wantest thou? whom dost  
thou seek,  
Oriana?

I cry aloud: none hear my cries,  
Oriana.  
Thou comest between me and the  
skies,  
Oriana.  
I feel the tears of blood arise  
Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
Oriana.  
Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
Oriana.

O cursed hand! O cursed blow!  
Oriana!  
O happy thou that liest low,  
Oriana!  
All night the silence seems to flow  
Beside me in my utter woe,  
Oriana.  
A weary, weary way I go,  
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the  
sea,  
Oriana,  
I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
Oriana.  
Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
I dare not die and come to thee,  
Oriana.  
I hear the roaring of the sea,  
Oriana.

## CIRCUMSTANCE

Two children in two neighbour  
villages  
Playing mad pranks along the heathy  
leas ;  
Two strangers meeting at a festival ;  
Two lovers whispering by an orchard  
wall ;  
Two lives bound fast in one with  
golden ease ;  
Two graves grass-green beside a gray  
church-tower,  
Wash'd with still rains and daisy-  
blossomed ;  
Two children in one hamlet born and  
bred ;  
So runs the round of life from hour  
to hour.

## THE MERMAN

## I

Who would be  
A merman bold,  
Sitting alone,  
Singing alone  
Under the sea,  
With a crown of gold,  
On a throne ?

## II

I would be a merman bold ;  
I would sit and sing the whole of  
the day ;  
I would fill the sea-halls with a  
voice of power ;  
But at night I would roam abroad  
and play  
With the mermaids in and out of the  
rocks,

Dressing their hair with the white  
sea-flower ;  
And holding them back by their  
flowing locks  
I would kiss them often under the  
sea,  
And kiss them again till they  
kiss'd me  
Laughingly, laughingly ;  
And then we would wander away,  
away  
To the pale-green sea-groves  
straight and high,  
Chasing each other merrily.

## III

There would be neither moon nor  
star ;  
But the wave would make music  
above us afar —  
Low thunder and light in the magic  
night —  
Neither moon nor star.  
We would call aloud in the dreamy  
dells,  
Call to each other and whoop and  
cry  
All night, merrily, merrily ;  
They would pelt me with starry  
spangles and shells,  
Laughing and clapping their hands  
between,  
All night, merrily, merrily ;  
But I would throw to them back in  
mine  
Turkis and agate and almandine :  
Then leaping out upon them unseen  
I would kiss them often under the  
sea,  
And kiss them again till they  
kiss'd me  
Laughingly, laughingly.  
Oh ! what a happy life were mine  
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !  
Soft are the moss-beds under the  
sea ;  
We would live merrily, merrily.

## THE MERMAID

## I

Who would be  
A mermaid fair

Singing alone,  
Combing her hair  
Under the sea,  
In a golden curl  
With a comb of pearl,  
On a throne ?

## II

I would be a mermaid fair;  
I would sing to myself the whole of  
the day;  
With a comb of pearl I would comb  
my hair;  
And still as I comb'd I would sing  
and say,  
"Who is it loves me? who loves not  
me?"  
I would comb my hair till my ringlets  
would fall,  
Low adown, low adown,  
From under my starry sea-bud  
crown  
Low adown and around,  
And I should look like a fountain of  
gold  
Springing alone  
With a shrill inner sound,  
Over the throne  
In the midst of the hall;  
Till that great sea-snake under the  
sea  
From his coiled sleeps in the central  
depths  
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
Round the hall where I sat, and look  
in at the gate  
With his large calm eyes for the love  
of me.  
And all the mermen under the sea  
Would feel their immortality  
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

## III

But at night I would wander awry,  
away,  
I would fling on each side my low-  
flowing locks,  
And lightly vault from the throne  
and play  
With the mermen in and out of  
the rocks;

We would run to and fro, and hide  
and seek,  
On the broad sea-wolds in the  
crimson shells,  
Whose silvery spikes are highest  
the sea.  
But if any came near I would call,  
and shriek,  
And adown the steep like a wave I  
would leap  
From the diamond-ledges that jut  
from the dells;  
For I would not be kiss'd by all who  
would list,  
Of the bold merry mermen under the  
sea;  
They would sue me, and woo me, and  
flatter me,  
In the purple twilights under the sea;  
But the king of them all would carry  
me,  
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,  
In the branching jaspers under the  
sea;  
Then all the dry pied things that be  
In the hueless mosses under the sea  
Would curl round my silver feet  
silently,  
All looking up for the love of me.  
And if I should carol aloud, from  
aloft  
All things that are forked, and horned,  
and soft  
Would lean out from the hollow  
sphere of the sea,  
All looking down for the love of me.

## SONNET TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—  
thou wilt be  
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
To scare church-harpies from the  
master's feast;  
Our dusted velvets have much need  
of thee:  
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old  
saws,  
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd  
homily;  
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest  
energy

To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
 With iron-worded proof, hating to hark  
 The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
 Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk  
 Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne  
 Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark  
 Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

## PART I

On either side the river lie  
 Long fields of barley and of rye,  
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
 And thro' the field the road runs by  
 To many-tower'd Camelot;  
 And up and down the people go,  
 Gazing where the lilies blow  
 Round an island there below,  
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
 Little breezes dusk and shiver  
 Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
 By the island in the river  
 Flowing down to Camelot.  
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
 Overlook a space of flowers,  
 And the silent isle imbowers  
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
 Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
 By slow horses; and unhail'd  
 The shalllop fitteth silken-sail'd  
 Skimming down to Camelot:  
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
 Or at the casement seen her stand?  
 Or is she known in all the land,  
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early  
 In among the bearded barley,

I hear a song that echoes cheerly  
 From the river winding clearly,  
 Down to tower'd Camelot;  
 And by the moon the reaper weary,  
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
 Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy  
 Lady of Shalott."

## PART II

THERE she weaves by night and day  
 A magic web with colours gay.  
 She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay  
 To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear,  
 There she sees the highway near  
 Winding down to Camelot:  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market girls,  
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,  
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot;  
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
 The knights come riding two and two:  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
 For often thro' the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights,  
 And music, went to Camelot:  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed;  
 "I am half-sick of shadows," said  
 The Lady of Shalott.

## PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,

The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves,  
Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.

The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot :  
And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung,  
Beside remoto Shalott.

All in the bluc unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame to-  
gether,

As he rode down to Camelot.  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight  
glow'd,  
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse  
trode ;  
From underneath his helmet flow'd  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
" Tirra lirra," by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,

She look'd down to Camelot,  
Out flew the web and floated wide ;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side ;  
" The curse is come upon me," cried

The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV.

IN the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks com-  
plaining.

Heavily the low sky raining  
Over tower'd Camelot ;  
Down she came and found a boat  
Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote

*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse—  
Like some bold seer in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance  
Did she look to Camelot.  
And at the closing of the day  
She loosed the chain, and down she  
lay ;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot :  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.  
For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she diod,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot.  
Out upon the wharfs they came  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her  
name,  
The Lady of Shalott.

## MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

Who is this ? and what is here ?  
 And in the lighted palace near  
 Died the sound of royal cheer ;  
 And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
 All the knights at Camelot :  
 But Lancelot mus'd a little space ;  
 He said, " She has a lovely face ;  
 God in his mercy lend her grace,  
 The Lady of Shalott."

## MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

WITH one black shadow at its feet,  
 The house thro' all the level shines,  
 Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
 And silent in its dusty vines :  
 A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
 An empty river-bed before,  
 And shallows on a distant shore,  
 In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
 But " Ave Mary," made she  
 moan,  
 And " Ave Mary," night and  
 morn,  
 And " Ah," she sang, " to be all  
 alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love for-  
 lorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
 From brow and bosom slowly down  
 Thro' rosy taper fingers drew  
 Her streaming curls of deepest  
 brown  
 To left and right, and made appear,  
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine.  
 Her melancholy eyes divine,  
 The home of woe without a tear.  
 And " Ave Mary," was her moan,  
 " Madonna, sad is night and  
 morn ;"  
 And " Ah," she sang, " to be all  
 alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love for-  
 lorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past  
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
 Low on her knees herself she cast,  
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she ;  
 Complaining, " Mother, give me grace  
 To help me of my weary load."  
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
 The clear perfection of her face.

" Is this the form," she made  
 her moan,  
 " That won his praises night  
 and morn ? "  
 And " Ah," she said, " but I  
 wake alone,  
 I sleep forgotten, I wake for-  
 lorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would  
 bleat,  
 Nor any cloud would cross the  
 vault,  
 But day increased from heat to  
 heat,  
 On stony drought and steaming  
 salt ;  
 Till now at noon she slept again,  
 And seem'd knee-deep in mountain  
 grass,  
 And heard her native breezes pass,  
 And ruglets babbling down the glen.  
 She breathed in sleep a lower  
 moan,  
 And murmuring, as at night  
 and morn,  
 She thought, " My spirit is here  
 alone,  
 Walks forgotten, and is for-  
 lorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream :  
 She felt he was and was not  
 there.  
 She woke : the bubble of the stream  
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare  
 Shrank one sick willow sere and  
 small.  
 The river-bed was dusty-white ;  
 And all the furnace of the light  
 Struck up against the blinding wall.  
 She whisper'd, with a stifled  
 moan  
 More inward than at night or  
 morn,  
 " Sweet Mother, let me not here  
 alone  
 Live forgotten and die forlorn."  
 And, rising, from her bosom drew  
 Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
 For " Love," they said, " must needs  
 be true,  
 To what is loveliest upon earth."

An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look at her with slight, and say,  
" But now thy beauty flows  
away,  
So be alone for evermore."  
" O cruel heart," she changed  
her tone  
" And cruel love, whose end  
is scorn,  
Is this the end to be left alone,  
To live forgotten, and die for-  
lorn ! "

But sometimes in the falling day  
An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look into her eyes and say,  
" But thou shalt be alone no  
more."  
And flaming downward over all  
From heat to heat the day de-  
creased,  
And slowly rounded to the east  
The one black shadow from the wall.  
" The day to night," she made  
her moan,  
" The day to night, the night  
to morn,  
And day and night I am left  
alone  
To live forgotten, and love for-  
lorn."

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
There came a sound as of the sea ;  
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
And lean'd upon the balcony.  
There all in spaces rosy-bright  
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
And deepening thro' the silent  
spheres,  
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.  
And weeping then she made her  
moan,  
" The night comes on that  
knows not morn,  
When I shall cease to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love  
forlorn."

## ELEÄNORE

## I

Thy dark eyes open'd not,  
Nor first reveal'd themselves to  
English air,

For there is nothing here,  
Which, from the outward to the in-  
ward brought,  
Moulded thy baby thought.  
Far off from human neighbourhood,  
Thou wert born, on a summer  
morn,  
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.  
Thy bounteous forehead was not  
fann'd  
With breezes from our oaken glades,  
But thou wert nursed in some delicious  
land  
Of lavish lights, and floating  
shades :  
And flattering thy childish thought  
The oriental fairy brought,  
At the moment of thy birth,  
From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
And the hearts of purple hills,  
And shadow'd coves on a sunny  
shore,  
The choicest wealth of all the  
earth,  
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,  
To deck thy cradle, Eleanore.

## II

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
Thro' half-open lattices  
Coming in the scented breeze,  
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
With whitest honey in fairy  
gardens cull'd—  
A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
In silk-soft folds, upon yielding  
down,  
With the hum of swarming bees  
Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

## III

Who may minister to thee ?  
Summer herself should minister  
To thee, with fruitage golden-  
rinded  
On golden salvers, or it may be,  
Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
Grape-thicken'd from the light, and  
blinded  
With many a deep-hued bell-like  
flower

Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
And the crag that fronts the Even,  
All along the shadowing shore,  
Crimsons over an inland mere,  
Eleānore !

## IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,  
How may measured words adore  
The full-flowing harmonu  
Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
Eleānore ?  
The luxuriant symmetry  
Of thy floating gracefulness,  
Eleānore ?  
Every turn and glance of thine,  
Every lineament divine,  
Eleānore,  
And the steady sunset glow,  
That stays upon thee ? For in  
thee  
Is nothing sudden, nothing  
single ;  
Like two streams of inconse free  
From one conser, in one shrine,  
Thought and motion mingle,  
Mingle ever. Motions flow  
To one another, even as tho'  
They were modulated so  
To an unheard melody,  
Which lives about thee, and a  
sweep  
Of richest pauses, evermore  
Drawn from each other mellow-  
deep ;  
Who may express thee, Eleā-  
nore ?

## V

I stand before thee, Eleānore ;  
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
Daily and hourly, more and more.  
I muse, as in a trance, the while  
Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile,  
I muse, as in a trance, whence'er  
The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
Float on to me. I would I were  
So tranced, so rapt in ecstacies,  
To stand apart, and to adore,  
Gazing on thee for evermore,  
Serene, imperial Eleānore !

## VI

Sometimes, with most intensity  
Gazing, I seem to see  
Thought folded over thought, smiling  
asleep,  
Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and  
deep  
In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd  
quite,  
I cannot veil, or droop my sight,  
But am as nothing in its light :  
As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,  
Ev'n while we gaze on it,  
Should slowly round his orb, and  
slowly grow  
To a full face, there like a sun remain  
Fix'd - then as slowly fade again,  
And draw itself to what it was  
before ;  
So full, so deep, so slow,  
Thought seems to come and go  
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleānore

## VII

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,  
Roil'd the world with doubt and  
fear,  
Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,  
Grow golden all about the sky ;  
In thee all passion becomes passion-  
less,  
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
Losing his fire and active might  
In a silent meditation,  
Falling into a still delight,  
And luxury of contemplation :  
As waves that up a quiet cove  
Rolling slide, and lying still  
Shadow forth the banks at will :  
Or sometimes they swell and move,  
Pressing up against the land,  
With motions of the outer sea :  
And the self-same influence  
Contraleth all the soul and sense  
Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
His bow-string slacken'd, languid  
Love,  
Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
Droops both his wings, regarding  
thee,  
And so would languish evermore,  
Serene, imperial Eleānore.

## VIII

But when I see thee roam, with  
tresses unconfined,  
While the amorous, odorous wind  
Breathes low between the sunset  
and the moon ;  
Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
On silken cushions half reclined ;  
I watch thy grace ; and in its  
place  
My heart a charmed slumber keeps  
While I muse upon thy face ;  
And a lauguid fire creeps  
'Thro' all my veins to my frame  
Dissolingly and slowly : soon  
From thy rose-red lips my  
name  
Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,  
With dinning sound my ears are  
rite,  
My tremulous tonge faltereth,  
I lose my colour, I lose my  
breath,  
I drink the cup of a costly death,  
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of  
warmest life.  
I die with my delight, before  
I hear what I would hear from  
thee ;  
Yet tell my name again to me,  
I would be dying evermore.  
So dying over, Eleænore.

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I see the wealthy miller yet,  
His double chin, his portly size,  
And who that knew him could forget  
The busy wrinkles round his eyes ?  
The slow wise smile that, round about  
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,  
Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
And full of dealings with the world ?

In yonder chair I see him sit,  
Three fingers round the old silver  
cup—

I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up  
With summer lightnings of a soul  
So full of summer warmth, so glad,

So healthy, sound, and clear and  
whole,  
His memory scarce can make me  
sad.

Yet fill my glass : give me one kiss :  
My own sweet Alice, we must die.  
There's somewhat in this world amiss  
Shall be unriddled by and by.  
There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
But more is taken quite away.  
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth ?  
I least should breathe a thought of  
pain.

Would God renew me from my birth  
I'd almost live my life again.  
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
And once again to woo thee mine—  
It seems in after-dinner talk  
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy  
Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
Where this old mansion mounted  
high  
Looks down upon the village spire :  
For even here, where I and you  
Have lived and loved alone so long,  
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'  
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove  
In firry woodlands making moan ;  
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
I had no motion of my own.  
For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
Before I dream'd that pleasant  
dream—

Still hither thither idly sway'd  
Like those long mosses in the  
stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear  
The milldam rushing down with  
noise,

And see the minnows everywhere  
In crystal eddies glance and poise,  
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
Below the range of stepping-stones,  
Or those three chestnuts near, that  
hung  
In masses thick with milky cones.

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
When after roving in the woods  
('Twas April then), I came and sat  
Below the chestnuts, whom their  
buds  
Were glistening to the breezy blue ;  
And on the slope, an absent fool,  
I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
An echo from a measured strain,  
Beat time to nothing in my head  
From some odd corner of the brain.  
It haunted me, the morning long,  
With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
The phantom of a silent song,  
That went and came a thousand  
times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood  
I watch'd the little circles die ;  
They past into the level flood,  
And there a vision caught my eye ;  
The reflex of a beauteous form,  
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
Within the dark and dimpledbeck.

For you remember, you had set,  
That morning, on the casement's  
edge  
A long green box of mignonette,  
And you were leaning from the  
ledge :  
And when I raised my eyes, above  
They met with two so full and  
bright—  
Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,  
That these have never lost their  
sight.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear  
That I should die an early death :  
For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
And fill'd the breast with purer  
breath.  
My mother thought, What ails the  
boy ?  
For I was alter'd, and began  
To move about the house with joy,  
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,  
The sleepy pool above the dam,  
The pool beneath it never still,  
The meal-sacks on the whit'en'd  
floor,  
The dark round of the dripping  
wheel,  
The very air about the door  
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
When April nights began to blow,  
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
I saw the village lights below ;  
I knew your taper far away,  
And full at heart of trembling hope,  
From off the wold I came, and lay  
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the  
mill ;  
And " by that lamp," I thought,  
" she sits ! "  
The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits,  
" O that I were beside her now !  
O will she answer if I call ?  
O would she give me vow for vow,  
Sweet Alice, if I told her all ? "

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;  
And, in the pauses of the wind,  
Sometimes I heard you sing within ;  
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the  
blind.  
At last you rose and moved the light,  
And the long shadow of the chair  
Flitted across into the night,  
And all the casement darken'd  
there.

But when at last I dared to speak,  
The lanes, you know, were white  
with may,  
Your ripe lips moved not, but your  
cheek  
Flush'd like the coming of the day ;  
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,  
You would, and would not, little  
one !  
Although I pleaded tenderly,  
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought  
To yield consent to my desire :  
She wish'd me happy, but she  
thought

I might have look'd a little higher ;  
And I was young—too young to wed ;  
" Yet must I love her for your sake ;  
Go fetch your Alice here," she said :  
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride :  
But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;  
This dress and that by turns you  
tried,  
Too fearful that you should not  
please.

I loved you better for your fears,  
I knew you could not look but well ;  
And dews, that would have fall'n in  
tears,

I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,  
The doubt my mother would not  
see ;

She spoke at large of many things,  
And at the last she spoke of me ;  
And turning look'd upon your face,  
As near this door you sat apart,  
And rose, and, with a silent grace  
Approaching, press'd you heart to  
heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song  
I gave you, Alice, on the day  
When, arm in arm, we went along,  
A pensive pair, and you were gay  
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,  
As in the nights of old, to lie  
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,  
While those full chestnuts whisper  
by.

It is the miller's daughter,  
And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
That I would be the jewel  
That trembles at her ear :  
For hid in ringlets day and night,  
I'd touch her neck so warm and  
white.

And I would be the girdle  
About her dainty dainty waist,  
And her heart would beat against me  
In sorrow and in rest ;  
And I should know if it beat right,  
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,  
And all day long to fall and rise  
Upon her balmy bosom,  
With her laughter or her sighs,  
And I would lie so light, so light,  
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love  
spells—

True love interprets—right alone.  
His light upon the letter dwells,  
For all the spirit is his own.  
So, if I waste words now, in truth  
You must blame Love. His early  
rage  
Had force to make me rhyme in  
youth,  
And makes me talk too much in  
age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
Like mine own life to me thou art,  
Where Past and Present, wound in  
one,

Do make a garland for the heart :  
So sing that other song I made,  
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,  
The day, when in the chestnut shade  
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,  
Can he pass, and we forget ?  
Many suns arise and set.  
Many a chance the years beget.  
Love the gift is Love the debt.

Even so.  
Love is hurt with jar and fret.  
Love is made a vague regret.  
Eyes with idle tears are wet.  
Idle habit links us yet.  
What is love ? for we forget :  
Ah, no ! no !

Look thro' mine eyes with thine—  
True wife,

Round my true heart thine arms  
entwine ;  
My other dearer life in life,  
Look thro' my very soul with  
thine !

Untouch'd with any shade of years,  
May those kind eyes for ever dwell !  
They have not shed a many tears,  
Dear eyes, since first I knew them  
well.

Yet tears they shed : they had their part

Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,  
The still affection of the heart  
Became an outward breathing type,  
That into stillness past again,  
And left a want unknown before ;  
Although the loss that brought us

pain,

That loss but made us love the more,  
With farther lookings on. The kiss,  
The woven arms, seem but to be  
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
The comfort, I have found in thee :  
But that God bless thee, dear—who

wrought

Two spirits to one equal mind—  
With blessings beyond hope or  
thought,  
With blessings which no words can  
find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,  
To yon old mill across the wolds ;  
For look, the sunset, south and north,  
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
And fires your narrow casement glass,  
Touching the sullen pool below :  
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

### FATIMA

O Love, Love, Love ! O withering might !

O sun, that from thy noonday height  
Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,  
Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and  
blind,  
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
Below the city's eastern towers :  
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :  
I roll'd among the tender flowers :  
I crush'd them on my breast, my  
mouth :

I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his  
name,

From my swift blood that went and  
came

A thousand little shafts of flame  
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.  
O Love, O fire ! once he drew  
With one long kiss my whole soul  
thro'

My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
He cometh quickly : from below  
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens,  
blow

Before him, striking on my brow,  
In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
Down-deepening from swoon to  
swoon,

Paints like a dazzled morning  
moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
And from beyond the moon a fire  
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher  
The skies stoop down in their desire ;  
And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
My heart, pierc'd thro' with fierce  
delight,  
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,  
All naked in a sultry sky,  
Droops blinded with his shining eye :  
I will possess him or will die.  
I will grow round him in his place,  
Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

### GENONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
The swimming vapour slopes athwart  
the glen,  
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from  
pine to pine,  
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either  
hand  
The lawns and meadow-ledges mid-  
way down  
Hang rich in flowers, and far below  
them roars  
The long brook falling thro' the  
clov'n ravine

In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
Stands up and takes the morning :  
    but in front  
The gorges, opening wide apart,  
    reveal  
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon  
Mournful Genone, wandering forlorn  
Of Paris, once her playmate on the  
    hills.  
Her cheek had lost the rose, and  
    round her neck  
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in  
    rest.  
She, leaning on a fragment twined  
    with vine,  
Sang to the stillness, till the moun-  
tain-shade  
Sloped downward to her seat from the  
    upper cliff.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd  
    Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
For now the noonday quiet holds the  
    hill :  
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :  
The lizard, with his shadow on the  
    stone,  
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala  
    sleeps.  
The purple flowers droop : the golden  
    bee  
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.  
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of  
    love,  
My heart is breaking, and my eyes  
    are dim,  
And I am all aweary of my life.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd  
    Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Hear me O Earth, hear me O Hills,  
    O Caves  
That house the cold crown'd snake !  
    O mountain brooks,  
I am the daughter of a River-God,  
Hear me, for I will speak, and build  
    up all  
My sorrow with my song, as yonder  
    walls

Rose slowly to a music slowly  
breathed,  
A cloud that gather'd shape : for it  
    may be  
That, while I speak of it, a little while  
My heart may wander from its deep-  
    woe.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd  
    Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-  
    dark,  
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain  
    pine :  
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,  
    white-hooved,  
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the  
    cleft :  
Far up the solitary morning smote  
The streaks of virgin snow. With  
    down-dropt eyes  
I sat alone : white-breasted like a star  
Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leo-  
    pard skin  
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his  
    sunny hair  
Cluster'd about his temples like a  
    God's ;  
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-  
    bow brightens  
When the wind brows the foam, and  
    all my heart  
Went forth to embrace him coming  
    ere he came.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I  
    die.  
He smiled, and opening out his milk-  
    white palm  
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian  
    gold,  
That smelt ambrosially, and while I  
    look'd  
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of  
    speech  
Came down upon my heart.

“ ‘ ‘ My own Cenone,  
Beautiful-brow’d Cenone, my own  
soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming  
rind ingraiv’n  
“ For the most fair,” would seem to  
award it thine,  
As lovelier than whatever Oread  
haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
Of movement, and the charm of  
married brows.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I  
die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to  
mine,  
And added ‘ This was cast upon the  
board,  
When all the full-faced presence of the  
Gods  
Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; where-  
upon  
Rose feud, with question unto whom  
’ twere due :  
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-  
eve,  
Delivering, that to me, by common  
voice  
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,  
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within  
the cave  
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest  
pine,  
Mayst well behold them un beheld,  
unheard  
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of  
Gods.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I  
die.  
It was the deep midnoon : one silvery  
cloud  
Had lost his way between the piney  
sides  
Of this long glen. Then to the bower  
they came,  
Naked they came to that smooth-  
swarded bower,  
And at their feet the crocus brake like  
fire,  
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,

And overhead the wandering ivy  
and vine,  
This way and that, in many a wild  
restoon  
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled  
boughs  
With bunch and berry and flower  
thro’ and thro’.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die,  
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
And o’er him flow’d a golden cloud,  
and lean’d  
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant  
dew.  
Then first I heard the voice of her,  
to whom  
Coming thro’ Heaven, like a light  
that grows  
Larger and clearer, with one mind  
the Gods  
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris  
made  
Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
Unquestion’d, overflowing revenue  
Wherewith to embellish state, ‘ from  
many a vale  
And river-sunder’d champaign  
clothed with corn,  
Or labour’d mines undrainable of ore,  
Honour,’ she said, ‘ and homage, tax  
and toll,  
From many an inland town and  
haven large,  
Mast-throng’d beneath her shadow-  
ing citadel  
In glassy bays among her tallest  
towers.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Still she spake on and still she spak  
of power,  
‘ Which in all action is the end of all :  
Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-  
bred  
And throned of wisdom—from all  
neighbour crowns  
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such  
boon from me,  
From me, Heaven’s Queen, Paris,  
to thee king-born,  
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-  
born,

Should come most welcome, seeing  
men, in power  
Only, are liklest gods, who have  
attain'd  
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
Above the thunder, with undying  
bliss  
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I  
die.  
She ceased, and Paris held the costly  
fruit  
Out at arm's-length, so much the  
thought of power  
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where  
she stood  
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared  
limbs  
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed  
spear  
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
The while, above, her full and earnest  
eye  
Over her snow-cold breast and angry  
cheek  
Kept watch, waiting decision, made  
reply.

" ' Self-reverence, self-knowledge,  
self-control,  
These three alone lead life to sovereign  
power.  
Yet not for power, (power of herself  
Would come uncall'd for) but to live  
by law,  
Acting the law we live by without  
fear;  
And, because right is right, to follow  
right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of conse-  
quence.'

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I  
die.  
Again she said: ' I woo thee not with  
gifts.  
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
To fairor. Judge thou me by what I  
am,  
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,  
If gazing on divinity disrobed  
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of  
fair,  
Unbiass'd by self-profit, oh! rest  
thee sure  
That I shall love thee well and cleave  
to thee,  
So that my vigour, wedded to thy  
blood,  
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a  
God's,  
To push thee forward thro' a life of  
shocks,  
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance  
grow  
Sinew'd with action, and the full-  
grown will,  
Circled thro' all experiences, pure  
law,  
Commeasure perfect freedom.'

" Here she ceased,  
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, ' O  
Paris,  
Give it to Pallas! ' but he heard me  
not,  
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is  
me!

" O mother Ida, many-fountain'd  
Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,  
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in  
Paphian wells,  
With rosy slender fingers backward  
drew  
From her warm brows and bosom her  
deep hair  
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid  
throat  
And shoulder: from the violets her  
light foot  
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her  
rounded form  
Between the shadows of the vine-  
bunches  
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she  
moved.

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I  
die.  
She with a subtle smile in her mild  
eyes,

The herald of her triumph, drawing  
nigh  
Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise  
thee  
The fairest and most loving wife in  
Greece.'  
She spoke and laugh'd : I shut my  
sight for fear :  
But when I look'd, Paris had raised  
his arm,  
And I beheld great Here's angry eyes,  
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
And I was left alone within the  
bower ;  
And from that time to this I am alone,  
And I shall be alone until I die.

" Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I  
die,  
Fairest—why fairest wife ? am I not  
fair ?  
My love hath told me so a thousand  
times.  
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
When I past by, a wild and wanton  
pard,  
Eyed like the evening star, with play-  
ful tail  
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most  
loving is she ?  
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that  
my arms  
Were wound about thee, and my hot  
lips prest  
Close, close to thine in that quick-  
falling dew.  
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn  
rains  
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

" O mother, hear me yet before I  
die.  
They came, they cut away my tallest  
pines,  
My dark tall pines, that plumed the  
craggy ledge  
High over the blue gorge, and all  
between  
The snowy peak and snow-white  
cataract  
Foster'd the callow eaglet—from  
beneath  
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the  
dark morn

The panther's roar came muffled,  
while I sat  
Low in the valley. Never, never  
more  
Shall lone Genone see the morning mist  
Sweep thro' them ; never see them  
overlaid  
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver  
cloud,  
Between the loud stream and the  
trembling stars.

" O mother, hear me yet before I  
die.  
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd  
folds,  
Among the fragments tumbled from  
the glen,  
Or the dry thickets, I could meet  
with her,  
The Abominable, that uninvited came  
Into the fair Pelefan banquet-hall,  
And cast the golden fruit upon the  
board,  
And bred this change ; that I might  
speak my mind,  
And tell her to her face how much I  
hate  
Her presence, hated both of Gods  
and men.

" O mother, hear me yet before I  
die.  
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand  
times,  
In this green valley, under this green  
hill,  
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this  
stone ?  
Seal'd it with kisses ? water'd it with  
tears ?  
O happy tears, and how unlike to  
these !  
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see  
my face ?  
O happy earth, how canst thou bear  
my weight ?  
O death, death, death, thou ever-  
floating cloud,  
There are enough unhappy on this  
earth,  
Pass by the happy souls, that love to  
live :

I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
Thou weighst heavy on the heart within,  
Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die.

" O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,  
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,  
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
Conjectures of the features of her child  
Ere it is born : her child !—a shudder comes  
Across me : never child be born of me,  
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes !

" O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me  
Walking the cold and starless road of Death  
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go  
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth  
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
What this may be I know not, but I know  
That, whereso'er I am by night and day,  
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

## THE SISTERS

WE were two daughters of one race :  
She was the fairest in the face :  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
They were together, and she fell ;  
Therefore revenge became me well.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

She died : she went to burning flame :  
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.  
The wind is howling in turret and tree.  
Whole weeks and months, and early and late,  
To win his love I lay in wait :  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bad him come :  
I won his love, I brought him home.  
The wind is roaring in turret and tree.  
And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head :  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.  
The wind is raging in turret and tree.  
I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :  
I made my dagger sharp and bright.  
The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
As half-asleep his breath he drew,  
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,  
He look'd so grand when he was dead.  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
I wrapt his body in the sheet,  
And laid him at his mother's feet  
O the Earl was fair to see !

TO —  
WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of allegory, (For you will understand it) of a soul, A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts, A spacious garden full of flowering weeds, A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain, That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen In all varieties of mould and mind) And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good, Good only for its beauty, seeing not That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters That doat upon each other, friends to man, Living together under the same roof, And never can be sunder'd without tears, And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie Howling in outer darkness. Not for this Was common clay ta'en from the common earth, Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

## THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house, Wherein at ease for aye to dwell, I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse, Dear soul, for all is well." A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass, I chose. The ranged ramparts bright From level meadow-bases of deep grass Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf The rock rose clear, or winding stair, My soul would live alone unto herself In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I said, "Reign thou apart, a quiet king, Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily: "Trust me, in bliss I shall abide In this great mansion, that is built for me, So royal-rich and wide."

\* \* \*

Four courts I made, East, West and South and North, In each a squared lawn, wherefrom The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods, Echoing all night to that sonorous flow Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery That lent broad verge to distant lands, Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell Across the mountain stream'd below In misty folds, that floating as they fell Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue  
seem'd  
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd  
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, " And who shall  
gaze upon  
My palace with unblinded eyes,  
While this great bow will waver in the  
sun,

And that sweet incense rise ? "

For that sweet incense rose and never  
fail'd,

And, while day sank or mounted  
higher,

The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows,  
stain'd and traced,  
Would seem slow-flaming crimson  
fires

From shadow'd grot's of arches inter-  
laced,

And tipt with frost-like spires.

\* \* \*

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
Thro' which the livelong day my soul  
did pass,

Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the  
palace stood,

All various, each a perfect whole  
From living Nature, fit for every  
mood

And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green  
and blue,

Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puff'd cheek the belted  
hunter blew

His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract  
of sand,

And some one pacing there alone,

Who paced for ever in a glimmering  
land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry  
waves.

You seem'd to hear them climb  
and fall  
And roar rock-thwarted under bellow-  
ing caves,  
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
By herds upon an endless plain,  
The ragged rims of thunder brooding  
low,  
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry  
toil.

In front they bound the sheaves.  
Behind

Were realms of upland, prodigal in  
oil,  
And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with  
stones and slags,  
Beyond, a line of heights, and  
higher

All barr'd with long white cloud the  
scornful crags,  
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray  
twilight pour'd

On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep—all things in order  
stored,

A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape  
fair

As fit for every mood of mind,  
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern,  
was there,

Not less than truth design'd.

\* \* \*

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
Beneath branch-work of costly sar-  
donyx

Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,  
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept St.  
Cecily ;  
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Para-  
dise,  
A group of Houris bow'd to see  
The dying Islamite, with hands and  
eyes  
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded  
son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw  
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Auso-  
nian king to hear  
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd  
And many a tract of palm and rice,  
The throne of Indian Cama slowly  
sail'd

A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blow un-  
clasp'd,  
From off her shoulder backward  
borne :

From one hand droop'd a crocus :  
one hand grasp'd  
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy  
thigh  
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,  
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
Above the pillar'd town.

Not these alone : but every legend  
fair  
Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
Carved out of Nature for itself, was  
there,

Not less than life, design'd.

\* \* \*

Then in the towers I placed great bells  
that swung,  
Moved of themselves, with silver  
sound ;  
And with choice paintings of wise  
men I hung  
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph  
strong,  
Beside him Shakespeare bland and  
mild ;  
And there the world worn Dante  
grasp'd his song,  
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the  
rest ;  
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;  
A hundred winters snow'd upon his  
breast,  
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-  
set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every  
land  
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden  
slow,  
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads  
and stings ;

Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break  
or bind  
All force in bonds that might  
endure,  
And here once more like some sick man  
declined,  
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those  
great bells  
Began to chime. She took her  
throne :

She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,  
To sing her songs alone,

And thro' the topmost Oriels' colour'd  
flame

Two godlike faces gazed below ;  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd  
Verulam,  
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their  
motion were  
Full-welling fountain-heads of  
change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were  
blazon'd fair  
In diverse raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,  
emerald, bluo,  
Flush'd in her temples and her  
eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from  
Memnon, drew  
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd  
song  
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feast-  
ful mirth,  
Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible  
earth,  
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself : " All these  
are mine,  
And let the world have peace or  
wars,

"Tis one to me." She—when young  
night divine  
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious  
toils—

Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious  
oils  
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven ; and clapt her  
hands and cried,  
" I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and  
wide,  
Be flatter'd to the height.

" O all things fair to sate my various  
eyes !  
O shapes and hues that please me  
well !

O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell !

" O God-like isolation which art mine,  
I can but count theo perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening  
droves of swine  
That range on yonder plain.

" In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient  
skin,  
They graze and wallow, breed and  
sleep ;  
And oft some brainless devil enters  
in,  
And drives them to the deep."

Then of the moral instinct would she  
prate,  
And of the rising from the dead,  
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd  
Fate ;  
And at the last she said :

" I take possession of man's mind  
and deed.  
I care not what the sects may  
brawl,  
I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
But contemplating all."

\* \* \*

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
Yet not the less held she her solemn  
mirth,  
And incollectual throne.

And so she thrave and prosper'd : so  
three years  
She prosper'd : on the fourth she  
fell,

Like Herod, when the shout was in  
his ears,  
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
God, before whom ever lie bare  
The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she  
turn'd her sight,  
The airy hand confusion wrought,  
Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided  
quite  
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her soli-  
tude  
Fell on her, from which mood was  
born  
Scorn of herself; again, from out  
that mood  
Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of  
strength," she said,  
"My spacious mansion built for  
me,  
Wherof the strong foundation-stones  
were laid  
Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace  
stood  
Uncertain shapes; and unawares  
On white-eyed phantasms weeping  
tears of blood,  
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts  
of flame,  
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon  
she came,  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without  
light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my  
soul,  
Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of  
sand;

Left on the shore; that hears all  
night  
The plunging seas draw backward  
from the land  
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry  
dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing  
saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circum-  
stance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had  
curl'd.  
"No voice," she shriek'd in that  
lone hall,  
"No voice breaks thro' the stillness  
of this world:  
One deep, deep silence all!"

She, mouldering with the dull earth's  
mouldering sod,  
Inwreapt tenfold in slothful shame,  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,  
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with  
fears,  
And ever worse with growing time,  
And over unrelieved by dismal tears,  
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt  
round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seem'd to hear the dullly  
sound  
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walk-  
ing slow,  
In doubt and great perplexity;  
A little before moon-rise hears the  
low  
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder or a sound  
 Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry  
 Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh,  
 " I have found  
 A new land, but I die."  
 She howl'd aloud, " I am on fire with-in.  
 There comes no murmur of reply.  
 What is it that will take away my sin,  
 And save me lest I die ?"  
 So when four years were wholly finished,  
 She threw her royal robes away.  
 " Make me a cottage in the vale,"  
 she said,  
 " Where I may mourn and pray.  
 " Yet pull not down my palace towers,  
 that are  
 So lightly, beautifully built:  
 Perchance I may return with others  
 there  
 When I have purged my guilt."

You sought to prove how I could love,  
 And my disdain is my reply.  
 The lion on your old stone gates  
 Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 You put strange memories in my head.  
 Not thrice your branching limes have blown  
 Since I beheld young Laurence dead.  
 Oh your sweet eycs, your low replies :  
 A great enchantress you may be ;  
 But there was that across his throat  
 Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere, .  
 When thus he met his mother's view,  
 She had the passions of her kind,  
 She spake some certain truths of you.  
 Indeed I heard one bitter word  
 That scarce is fit for you to hear ;  
 Her manners had not that repose,  
 Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

## LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,  
 Of me you shall not win renown :  
 You thought to break a country heart  
 For pastime, ere you went to town.  
 At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
 I saw the snare, and I retired :  
 The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
 You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 I know you proud to bear your name,  
 Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
 Too proud to care from whence I came.  
 Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
 A heart that doats on truer charms.  
 A simple maiden in her flower  
 Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 Some meeker pupil you must find,  
 For were you queen of all that is,  
 I could not stoop to such a mind.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 There stands a spectre in your hall :  
 The guilt of blood is at your door :  
 You changed a wholesome heart to gall.  
 You held your course without remorse,  
 To make him trust his modest worth,  
 And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,  
 And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 From yon blue heavens above us bent  
 The grand old gardener and his wife  
 Smile at the claims of long descent,  
 Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
 'Tis only noble to be good.  
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
 And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere :  
 You pine among your halls and towers :  
 The languid light of your proud eyes  
 Is wearied of the rolling hours.  
 In glowing health, with boundless wealth,  
 But sickening of a vague disease,  
 You know so ill to deal with time,  
 You needs must play such pranks  
 as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 If Time be heavy on your hands,  
 Are there no beggars at your gate,  
 Nor any poor about your lands ?  
 Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,  
 Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,  
 Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
 And let the foolish yeoman go.

## THE MAY QUEEN

You must wake and call me early,  
 call me early, mother dear ;  
 To-morrow 'll be the happiest time  
 of all the glad New-year ;  
 Of all the glad New-year, mother,  
 the maddest merriest day ;  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they  
 say, but none so bright as mine ;  
 There's Margaret and Mary, there's  
 Kate and Caroline :  
 But none so fair as little Alice in all  
 the land they say,  
 So I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother,  
 that I shall never wake,  
 If you do not call me loud when the  
 day begins to break :  
 But I must gather knots of flowers,  
 and buds and garlands gay,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think  
 ye should I see,  
 But Robin leaning on the bridge be-  
 neath the hazel-tree ?  
 He thought of that sharp look,  
 mother, I gave him yesterday, —  
 But I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother,  
 for I was all in white,  
 And I ran by him without speaking,  
 like a flash of light.  
 They call me cruel-hearted, but I care  
 not what they say,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but  
 that can never be :  
 They say his heart is breaking,  
 mother —what is that to me ?  
 There's many a bohler hat 'll woo me  
 any summer day,  
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Elsie shall go with me to-  
 morrow to the green,  
 And you'll be there, too, mother, to  
 see me made the Queen ;  
 For the shepherd lads on every side  
 'll come from far away,  
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has  
 wov'n its wavy bowers,  
 And by the meadow-trenches blow  
 the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers ;  
 And the wild marsh-marigold shines  
 like fire in swamps and hollows  
 gray,  
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother,  
 upon the meadow-grass,  
 And the happy stars above them seem  
 to brighten as they pass ;

There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,  
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glaunce and play,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May,  
mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year :  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

## NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set : he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind ;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we had a merry day ;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May ;  
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills : the frost is on the pane : I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again : I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high : I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree, And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea, And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave, But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine, In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine, Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill, When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night ; When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade, And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid. I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass, With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now ; You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go ; Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild, You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

## CONCLUSION

If I can I'll come again, mother, And sweet is all the land about, and  
 from out my resting-place ; all the flowers that blow,  
 Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall And sweeter far is death than life to  
 look upon your face ; me that long to go.  
 Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to  
 harken what you say, leave the blessed sun,  
 And be often, often with you when And now it seems as hard to stay, and  
 you think I'm far away. yet His will be done !  
  
 Goodnight, goodnight, when I have But still I think it can't be long before  
 said goodnight for evermore, I find release ;  
 And you see me carried out from the And that good man, the clergyman,  
 threshold of the door ; has told me words of peace.  
 Don't let Effie come to see me till my O blessings on his kindly voice and  
 grave be growing green : on his silver hair !  
 She'll be a better child to you than And blessings on his whole life long,  
 ever I have been. until he meet me there !  
  
 She'll find my garden-tools upon the O blessings on his kindly heart and on  
 granary floor : his silver head !  
 Let her take 'em : they are hers : I A thousand times I blest him, as he  
 shall never garden more : knelt beside my bed.  
 But tell her, when I'm gone, to train He taught me all the mercy, for he  
 the rose-bush that I set show'd me all the sin.  
 About the parlour-window and the Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late,  
 box of mignonette. there's One will let me in :  
  
 Good-night, sweet mother : call me Nor would I now be well, mother,  
 before the day is born. again, if that could be,  
 All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep For my desire is but to pass to Him  
 at morn ; that died for me.  
 But I would see the sun rise upon the I did not hear the dog howl, mother,  
 glad New-year. or the death-watch beat,  
 So, if you're waking, call me, call me There came a sweeter token when the  
 early, mother dear. night and morning meet :  
  
 But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,  
 And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

## CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and All in the wild March-morning I  
 yet alive I am : heard the angels call ;  
 And in the fields all round I hear the It was when the moon was setting,  
 bleating of the lamb. and the dark was over all ;  
 How sadly, I remember, rose the The trees began to whisper, and the  
 morning of the year ! wind began to roll,  
 To die before the snowdrop came, And in the wild March-morning I  
 and now the violet's here. heard them call my soul.  
  
 O sweet is the new violet, that comes For lying broad awake I thought of  
 beneath the skies, you and Effie dear ;  
 And sweeter is the young lamb's voice I saw you sitting in the house, and I  
 to me that cannot rise, no longer here ;

With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,  
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,  
And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said ;  
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,  
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping ; and I said, " It's not for them : it's mine." And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.  
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars, Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go. And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.  
But, Effie, you must comfort her when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret ; There's many worthier than I, would make him happy yet. If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife ; But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow ; He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know. And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine— Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun—

For ever and for ever with those just souls and true— And what is life, that we should moan ? why make we such ado ?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home— And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come— To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast— And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

" COURAGE ! " he said, and pointed toward the land, " This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon." In the afternoon they came unto a land, In which it seemed always afternoon. All round the coast the languid air did swoon, Breathing like one that hath a weary dream. Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ; And like a downward smoke, the slender stream Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke, Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ; And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke, Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below. They saw the gleaming river seaward flow From the inner land : far off, three mountain-tops, Three silent pinnacles of aged snow, Stood sunset-flush'd : and, dew'd with showery drops, Up-climb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low  
adown  
In the red West: thro' mountain  
clefts the dale  
Was seen far inland, and the yellow  
down  
Border'd with palm, and many a  
winding vale  
And meadow, set with slender galin-  
gale;  
A land where all things always seem'd  
the same!  
And round about the keel with faces  
pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy  
flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-  
eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted  
stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof  
they gave  
To each, but whoso did receive of  
them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the  
wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and  
rave  
On alien shores; and if his fellow  
spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the  
grave;  
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all  
awake,  
And music in his ears his beating  
heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow  
sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the  
shore;  
And sweet it was to dream of Father-  
land,  
Of child, and wife, and slave; but  
evermore  
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the  
oar,  
Weary the wandering fields of barren  
foam.  
Then some one said, "We will return  
no more;"

And all at once they sang, "Our island  
home  
Is far beyond the wave; we will no  
longer roam."

## CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer  
falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the  
grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between  
walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming  
pass;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down  
from the blissful skies.  
Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved  
flowers weep,  
And from the craggy ledge the poppy  
hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heavi-  
ness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp dis-  
tress,  
While all things else have rest from  
weariness?  
All things have rest: why should we  
toil alone,  
We only toil, who are the first of  
things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another  
thrown:  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's  
holy balm;  
Nor harken what the inner spirit  
sings,  
"There is no joy but calm!"  
Why should we only toil, the roof  
and crown of things?

## III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,  
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the  
bud  
With winds upon the branch, and  
there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no  
care,  
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed, and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air  
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
The full juiced apple, waxing over-  
mellow,  
Drops in a silent autumn night  
All its allotted length of days,  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath  
no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
Vanitied o'er the dark-blue sea.  
Death is the end of life, ah, why  
Should life all labour be ?  
Let us alone. Time driveth onward  
fast,  
And in a little while our lips are  
dumb  
Let us alone. What is it that will  
last ?  
All things are taken from us, and be-  
come  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful  
Past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we  
have  
To war with evil ? Is there any  
peace  
In even climbing up the climbing  
wave ?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward  
the grave  
In silence, ripen, fall and cease  
Give us long rest or death, dark death,  
or dreamful ease.

## V

How sweet it were, hearing the down-  
ward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem

Falling asleep in a half dream !  
To dream and dream, like yonder  
amber light,  
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush  
on the height,  
To hear each other's whisper'd  
speech,  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the  
beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy  
spray,  
To lend our hearts and spirits  
wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded  
melancholy,  
To muse and brood and live again in  
memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy  
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in  
an urn of brass !

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded  
lives,  
And dear the last embraces of our  
wives  
And their warm tears but all hath  
suffer'd change,  
For surely now our household hearths  
are cold  
Our sons inherit us our looks are  
strange  
And we should come like ghosts to  
trouble joy  
Or else the island princes over-bold  
Have eat our substance, and the min-  
strel sing's  
Before them of the ten-years' war in  
Troy,  
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten  
things,  
Is there confusion in the little isle ?  
Let what is broken so remain.  
The Gods are hard to reconcile  
'Tis hard to settle order once again  
There is confusion worse than death,  
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
Long labour unto aged breath,  
Sore task to hearts worn out with  
many wars  
And eyes grown dim with gazing on  
the pilot-stars.

## VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)  
With half-dropt cyclids still,  
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
His wafers from the purple hill—  
To hear the dewy echoes calling  
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—  
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling  
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!  
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

## VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :  
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :  
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :  
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.  
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,  
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,  
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea,  
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,  
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined  
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.  
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd  
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd  
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,  
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.  
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song  
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,  
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong ;  
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,  
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil ;  
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd—down in hell  
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,  
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.  
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore  
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar ;  
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
" *The Legend of Good Women,*" long ago  
Sung by the morning star of song, who made  
His music heard below ;  
Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
Preluded those melodious bursts, that fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
With sounds that echo still.

And for a while, the knowledge of his art  
Held me above the subject, as strong gales  
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart  
Brimful of those wild tales,

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way  
Crisp foam flakes scud along the level sand  
Torn from the fringe of spray.

Charged both mine eyes with tears  
In every hand  
I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
The downward slope to death.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,  
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,  
And flushes all the cheek.

Those fair-renowned brides of ancient song  
Peopled the hollow daik, like burning stars,  
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,  
And trumpets blown for wars,

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town,  
And then, I know not how,

And those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought  
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep  
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd and brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

And clattering flints batter'd with clang ing hoofs  
And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries,  
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs  
Of marble palace,

At last methought that I had wander'd far  
In an old wood fresh-wash'd in coolest dew,  
The maiden splendidous of the morning star  
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Corpses across the threshold, heroes tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall,  
Lances in ambush set,

Enormous elmtree-boles did stoop and lean  
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,  
New from its silken sheath.

And high shine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts  
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire,  
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,  
And ever climbing higher,

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,  
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers, woes,  
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,  
And hush'd scaglios.

There was no motion in the dumb  
dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of  
till;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of  
jasmine turn'd  
Their humid arms festooning tree  
to tree,  
And at the root thro' lush green  
grasses burn'd  
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves,  
I knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid  
dawn  
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks  
drench'd in dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the  
green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul  
and frame  
The times when I remember to have  
been  
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-  
tone  
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that  
unblissful clime  
"Pass freely thro': the wood is all  
thine own,  
Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Stiller than chisell'd marble, stand-  
ing there;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with  
surprise  
Froze my swift speech: she turning  
on my face  
The star-like sorrows of immortal  
eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place.

"I had great beauty: ask thou not  
my name:  
No one can be more wise than  
destiny.  
Many drew swords and died.  
Where'er I came  
I brought calamity."

"No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair  
field  
Myself for such a face had boldly  
died,"  
I answer'd free; and turning I appeal'd  
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks  
averse,  
To her full height her stately  
stature draws;  
"My youth," she said, "was blasted  
with a curse:  
This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad  
place,  
Which yet to name my spirit  
loathes and fears:  
My father held his hand upon his  
face;  
I, blinded with my tears,

"Still strove to spenk: my voice was  
thick with sighs  
As in a dream. Dimly I could  
descry  
The stern black-bearded kings with  
wolfish eyes,  
Waiting to see me die.

"The high masts flicker'd as they lay  
afloat;  
The crowds, the temples, waver'd,  
and the shore;  
The bright death quiver'd at the  
victim's throat;  
Touch'd; and I knew no more."

Whoreto the other with a downward  
brow:  
"I would the white cold heavy-  
plunging foam,  
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me  
deep below,  
Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the  
silence drear,  
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping  
sea :  
Sudden I heard a voice that cried,  
" Come here,  
That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a flowery  
rise,  
One sitting on a crimson scarf  
unroll'd ;  
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and  
bold black eyes,  
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile,  
began :  
" I govern'd men by change, and  
so I sway'd  
All moods. 'Tis long since I have  
seen a man.  
Once, like the moon, I made

" The ever-shifting currents of the  
blood  
According to my humour ebb and  
flow.

I have no men to govern in this wood :  
That makes my only woe.

" Nay—yet it chafes me that I could  
not bend  
One will ; nor tame and tutor with  
mine eye  
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Pry-  
thee, friend,  
Where is Mark Antony ?

" The man, my lover, with whom I  
rode sublime  
On Fortune's neck : we sat as God  
by God :  
The Nilus would have risen before  
his time  
And flooded at our nod.

" We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep,  
and lit  
Lamps which outburn'd Canopus.  
O my life  
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the  
wit,  
The flattery and the strife,

" And the wild kiss, when fresh from  
war's alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony.  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my  
arms,  
Contented there to die !

" And there he died : and when I  
heard my name  
Sigh'd forth with life I would not  
brook my fear  
Of the other : with a worm I balk'd  
his fame.  
What else was left ? look here ! "

(With that she tore her robe apart,  
and half  
The polish'd argent of her breast  
to sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with  
a laugh,  
Showing the aspick's bite)

" I died a Queen. The Roman soldier  
found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my  
brows,  
A name for ever !—lying robed and  
crown'd,  
Worthy a Roman spouse."

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest  
range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down  
and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro'  
all change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for  
delight ;  
Because with sudden motion from  
the ground  
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd  
with light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his  
keenest darts ;  
As once they drew into two burning  
rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty  
hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I  
heard  
A noise of some one coming thro'  
the lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested  
bird,  
That claps his wings at dawn.

"The torrent brooks of hallow'd  
Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late  
and soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro'  
the dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

"The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with  
beams divine :  
All night the splinter'd crags that  
wall the dell  
With spires of silver shine."

As one that museth where broad sun-  
shine laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro'  
the door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd  
and tied  
To where he stands,—so stood  
I, when that flow  
Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow :

The daughter of the warrior Gilcadite,  
A maiden pure ; as when she went  
along  
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with  
welcome light,  
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : " Heaven  
heads the count of crimes  
With that wild oath." She ren-  
der'd answer high :  
" Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand  
times  
I would be born and die.

" Single I grow, like some green plant,  
whose root  
Creeps to the garden water-pipes  
beneath,  
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower  
to fruit  
Changed, I was ripe for death.

" My God, my land, my father—  
these did move  
Me from my bliss of life, that  
Nature gave,  
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord  
of love  
Down to a silent grave.

" And I went mourning, ' No fair  
Hebrew boy  
Shall smile away my maiden blame  
among  
The Hebrew mothers' emptied of  
all joy,  
Leaving the dance and song,

" Leaving the olive gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal  
bower,  
The valleys of grape loaded vines that  
glow  
Beneath the battled tower,

" The light white cloud swam over us.  
Anon  
We heard the lion roaring from his  
den ;  
We saw the large white stars rise one  
by one,  
Or, from the darken'd glen,

" Saw God divide the night with  
flying flame,  
And thunder on the everlasting  
hills,  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief  
became  
A solemn scorn of ills.

" When the next moon was roll'd  
into the sky,  
Strength came to me that equal'd  
my desire,  
How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire !

<p>"It comforts me in this one thought to dwell, That I subdued me to my father's will; Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell, Sweetens the spirit still.</p>	<p>With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams, Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams Ruled in the eastern sky.</p>
<p>"Moreover it is written that my race Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her face Glow'd, as I look'd at her.</p>	<p>Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark, Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc, A light of ancient France;</p>
<p>She lock'd her lips : she left me where I stood : "Glory to God," she sang, and past afar, Thriddling the sombre boskage of the wood, Toward the morning-star.</p>	<p>Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish Death, Who kneeling, with one arm about her king, Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath, Sweet as new buds in Spring.</p>
<p>Losing her carol I stood pensively, As one that from a casement leans his head, When midnight bells cease ringing suddenlly, And the old year is dead.</p>	<p>No memory labours longer from the deep Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep To gather and tell o'er</p>
<p>"Alas ! alas ! " a low voice, full of care, Murmur'd beside me : " Turn and look on me : I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair, If what I was I be.</p>	<p>Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike Into that wondrous track of dreams again ! But no two dreams are like.</p>
<p>"Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor ! O me, that I should ever see the light ! Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor Do hunt me, day and night."</p>	<p>As when a soul laments, which hath been blest, Desiring what is mingled with past years, In yearnings that can never be ex- prest By signs or groans or tears</p>
<p>She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust ; To whom the Egyptian : " O, you tamely died ! You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust The dagger thro' her side."</p>	<p>Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art, Failing to give the bitter of the sweet, Wither beneath the palate, and the heart Faints, faded by its heat.</p>

## MARGARET

## I

O sweet pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 What lit your eyes with tearful  
 power,  
 Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
 Who lent you, love, your mortal  
 dower  
 Of pensive thought and aspect  
 pale,  
 Your melancholy sweet and frail  
 As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?  
 From the westward-winding flood,  
 From the evening-lighted wood,  
 From all things outward you  
 have won  
 A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
 Between the rainbow and the sun.  
 The very smile before you speak,  
 That dimples your transparent cheek,  
 Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
 The senses with a still delight  
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
 Like the tender amber round,  
 Which the moon about her spreadeth,  
 Moving thro' a fleecy night.

## II

You love, remaining peacefully,  
 To hear the murmur of the strife,  
 But enter not the toil of life.  
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.  
 You are the evening star, alway  
 Remaining betwixt dark and  
 bright:  
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
 Come to you, gleams of mellow  
 light  
 Float by you on the verge of night.

## III

What can it matter, Margaret,  
 What songs below the waning  
 stars  
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
 Sang looking thro' his prison  
 bars?  
 Exquisite Margaret, who can  
 tell

The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
 Just ere the falling axe did part  
 The burning brain from the  
 true heart,  
 Even in her sight he loved so  
 well?

## IV

A fairy shield your Genius made  
 And gave you on your natal day.  
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
 Keeps real sorrow far away.  
 You move not in such solitudes,  
 You are not less divine,  
 But more human in your moods,  
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
 Touch'd with a somewhat darker  
 hue,  
 And less aërially blue,  
 But ever trembling thro' the dew  
 Of dainty woeeful sympathies.

## V

O sweet pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 Come down, come down, and hear  
 me speak:  
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek:  
 The sun is just about to set,  
 The arching boughs are tall and shady,  
 And faint, rainy lights are seen,  
 Moving in the leavy beech.  
 Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
 Where all day long you sit  
 between  
 Joy and woe, and whisper  
 each.  
 Or only look across the lawn,  
 Look out below your bower-eaves,  
 Look down, and let your blue eyes  
 dawn  
 Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

## THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something  
 well:  
 While all the neighbours shoot thee  
 round,

I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
Are thine ; the range of lawn and park :  
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,  
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,  
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
With that gold dagger of thy bill  
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,  
Cold February loved, is dry :  
Plenty corrupts the melody  
That made thee famous once, when young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,  
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing  
While you sun prosters in the blue,  
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,  
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

#### THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily sighing :  
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly and speak low,  
For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die ;  
You came to us so readily,  
You lived with us so steadily,  
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :  
He will not see the dawn of day.  
He hath no other life above.  
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,  
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go ;  
So long as you have been with us,  
Such joy as you have seen with us,  
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim :  
A jollier year we shall not see.  
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
And tho' his fogs speak ill of him,  
He was a friend to me.  
Old year, you shall not die ;  
We did so laugh and cry with you,  
I've half a mind to die with you,  
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
But all his merry quips are o'er.  
To see him die, across the waste  
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
But he'll be dead before.  
Every one for his own.  
The night is starry and cold, my friend,  
And the New-year blithe and bold,  
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow  
I heard just now the crowing cock.  
The shadows flicker to and fro :  
The cricket chirps : the light burns low :  
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.  
Shake hands, before you die.  
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :  
What is it we can do for you ?  
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
Alack ! our friend is gone.  
Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :  
Step from the corpse, and let him in  
That standeth there alone,  
And waiteth at the door.  
There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,  
And a new face at the door, my friend,  
A new face at the door.

## TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain,  
blows  
More softly round the open wold,  
And gently comes the world to those  
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and in-  
vado  
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on  
most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs are  
nursed,

Fall into shadow, soonest lost :  
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to  
love  
He lends us ; but, when love is  
grown  
To ripeness, that on which it thrrove  
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !  
In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;  
Once thro' mine own doors Death did  
pass ;

One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me  
Once more. Two years his chair  
is seen  
Empty before us. That was he  
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer : for this star  
Rose with you thro' a little arc  
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust  
I honour and his living worth :  
A man more pure and bold and just  
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,  
Since that dear soul hath fall'n  
asleep.  
Great Nature is more wise than I :  
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
Drawn from the spirit thro' the  
brain,  
I will not even preach to you,  
" Weep, weeping dulls the inward  
pain."

Let Grief be her own mistress still.  
She loveth her own anguish deep  
More than much pleasure. Let her  
will  
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say " God's ordinance  
Of Death is blown in every wind ; "  
For that is not a common chance  
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
In all our hearts, as mournful light  
That broods above the fallen sun,  
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near  
Cast down her eyes, and in her  
throat  
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
How should I soothe you anyway,  
Who miss the brother of your youth ?  
Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :  
Both are my friends, and my true  
breast  
Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be  
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would  
make  
Grief more. 'Twere better I should  
cease ;  
Although myself could almost take  
The place of him that sleeps in  
peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace ;  
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons in-  
crease,  
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
Nothing comes to thee new or  
strange.  
Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

## BRITAIN

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas ?

It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
The land, where girt with friends or  
foes

A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where freedom broadens slowly  
down

From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But by degrees to fullness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive  
thought

Hath time and space to work and  
spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land  
to land

The name of Britain trebly great—  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should almost choke with golden  
sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,  
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

## FREEDOM

Or old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet :  
Above her shook the starry lights :  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and  
field

To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men reveal'd  
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, God-like, grasps the triple  
forks,

And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears :

That her fair form may stand and  
shine,  
Make bright our days and light our  
dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes !

## LOVE THOU THY LAND

Love thou thy land, with love far-  
brought  
From out the storied Past, and  
used  
Within the Present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power of  
thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
For English natures, freemen,  
friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

## LOVE THOU THY LAND

But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings  
The bold, wild hearts and feeble  
wings,  
That every sophister can linc.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness, neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for  
day,  
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the  
winds;  
But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
Before her to whatever sky  
Bear seed of men and growth of  
minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the  
years:  
Cut Prejudice against the grain:  
But gentle words are always gain:  
Regard the weakness of thy peers:

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
Of pension, neither count on praise:  
It grows to gurdon after-days:  
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch;

Not clinging to some ancient saw:  
Not master'd by some modern  
term;  
Not swift nor slow to change, but  
firm:  
And in its season bring the law;

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
With Life, that, working strongly,  
binds—  
Set in all lights by many minds,  
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
And moist and dry, devising long,  
Thro' many agents making strong,  
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
We all are changed by still degrees,  
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
To ingroove itself with that, which  
flies,  
And work, a joint of state, that plies  
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act;  
For all the past of Time reveals  
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Wherever Thought hath wedded  
Fact.

Evn now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom—  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Yearning to mix himself with Lite.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
Completion in a painful school;  
Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,  
But vague in vapour, hard to  
mark;  
And round them sea and air are  
dark  
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
Is bodied forth the second whole.  
Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
And heap their ashes on the head;  
To shame the boast so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous fend,  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall  
close,  
That Principles are rain'd in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
To hold his hope thro' shame and  
guilt,

But with his hand against the hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like  
Peace;

Not lew, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
Would serve his kind in deed and  
word,

Certain, if knowledge bring the  
sword,  
That knowledge takes the sword  
away—

Would love the gleams of good that  
broke  
From either side, nor veil his eyes :  
And if some dreadful need should rise  
Would strike, and firmly, and one  
stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
As we bear blossom of the dead ;  
Earn well the thrifty months, nor  
wed  
Raw Ilasto, half-sister to Delay.

## THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
Her rags scarce held together ;  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd rhyme and reason,  
"Here, take the goose, and keep you  
warm,  
It is a stormy season."

She caught the white goose by the log,  
A goose—'twas no great matter.  
The goose let fall a golden egg  
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the  
pelf,  
And ran to tell her neighbours ;  
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,  
And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able-bodied ;  
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,  
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
She felt her heart grow prouder :  
Butah ! the more the white goose laid  
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there ;  
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

"A quinsy choke thy cursed note !"  
Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
"Go, take the goose, and wring her  
throat,  
I will not bear it longer."

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the  
cat ;  
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew that,  
And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They flounder'd all together,  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd words of scorning ;  
"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
It is a stormy morning."

The wild wind rang from park and  
plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind clear'd the larden.

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,

Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger!"

## THE EPIC

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—  
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,  
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held a talk,  
How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,  
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games  
In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out  
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,  
Whore, three times slipping from the outer edge,  
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard  
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
Now harping on the church-omissioners,  
Now hawking at Geology and schism ;  
Until I woke, and found him settled down  
Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world, "at home was little left,  
And none abroad : there was no anchor, none,  
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt his hand  
On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by him."  
"And I," quoth Everard, "by the wassail-bowl."  
"Why yes," I said, "we knew your gift that way

At college : but another which you had,  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then.)  
What came of that?" "You know," said Frank, "he burnt His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books"—  
And then to me demanding why?  
"Oh, sir," He thought that nothing new was said, or else Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :  
God knows : he has a mint of reasons : ask,  
It pleased me well enough." "Nay, nay," said Hall,  
"Why take the style of those heroic times?  
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,  
Nor we those times ; and why should any man Remodel models ? these twelve books of mine Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,  
Mere chaff and draft, much better burnt." "But I," Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh from this hearth, And have it : keep a thing, its use will come.  
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."  
He laugh'd, and I, though sleepy, like a horse That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears ;  
For I remember'd Everard's college fame When we were Freshmen : then at my request He brought it ; and the poet little urged, But with some prelude of disparagement, Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aos, Deep-chested music, and to this result.

## MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle  
roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter  
sea ;  
Until King Arthur's table, man by  
man,  
Had fall'n in Lyonness about their  
Lord,  
King Arthur : then, because his  
wound was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his  
knights,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the  
field,  
A broken chancel with a broken  
cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren  
land.  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was  
full.  
Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
Bedivere :  
" The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous  
knights  
Whereof this world holds record.  
Such a sleep  
They sleep—the men I loved. I  
think that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
deeds,  
Walking about the gardons and the  
halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,—  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
again  
To rule once more—but let what will  
be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till  
morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excali-  
bur,  
Which was my pride : for thou re-  
memberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon,  
an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the  
lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic,  
wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I  
row'd across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a  
king :  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be  
known :  
But now delay not : take Excalibur,  
And sling him far into the middle  
mere :  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly  
bring me word."  
To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere :  
" It is not meet, Sir King, to leave  
thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the  
helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded  
man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring  
thee word."  
So saying, from the ruin'd shrine  
he stept  
And in the moon athwart the place of  
tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-  
wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
stepping down  
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed  
rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.  
There drew he forth the brand  
Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter  
moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against  
the hilt :  
For all the haft twinkled with  
diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-  
work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so  
long

That both his eyes were dazzled, as  
he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift  
mind,  
In act to throw: but at the last it  
seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted water-  
flags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the  
marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded  
king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
Bedivere:

" Hast thou perform'd my mission  
which I gave ?

What is it thou hast seen ? or what  
hast heard ? "

And answer made the bold Sir  
Bedivere :

" I heard the ripple washing in the  
reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the  
crag."

To whom replied King Arthur,  
faint and pale :

" Thou hast betray'd thy nature and  
thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as be-  
seem'd

Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :  
For surer sign had follow'd, either  
hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the  
mere.

This is a shameful thing for men to  
lie.

Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go  
again  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the  
thing

I bid thee, watch, and lightly bring  
me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second  
time

Across the ridge, and pac'd beside the  
mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
thought;

But when he saw the wonder of the  
hilt,

How curiously and strangely chased,  
he smote

His palms together, and he cried  
aloud.

" And if indeed I cast the brand  
away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy  
note,

Should thus be lost for ever from the  
earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes of  
many men.

What good should follow this, if this  
were done ?

What harm, undone ? deep harm to  
disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey then, if a king  
demand

An act unprofitable, against himself ?  
The King is sick, and knows not what  
he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty  
breath

And rumours of a doubt ? but were  
this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of  
mighty kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of  
arms,

Saying, ' King Arthur's sword, Exca-  
libur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the  
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in  
the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'  
So might some old man speak in the  
aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much  
fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the  
wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing  
heavily :

" What is it thou hast seen ? or what  
hast heard ? "

And answer made the bold Sir  
Bedivere :

" I heard the water lapping on the  
crag,

And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

" Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !

Authority forgets a dying king, Laid widow'd of the power in his eye That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,

Thou wouldest betray me for the precious hilt ;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl Valuing the giddly pleasure of the eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice, And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur, I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,

Seen where the moving isles of winter shock

By night, with noises of the northern sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in

the mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :

" Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.

Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

" Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal man,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under

in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :

" My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,

And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear

My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere

Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place  
of tombs.  
But, as he walk'd, King Arthur  
panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his  
bed  
When all the house is mute. So  
sigh'd the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear  
"Quick, quick !  
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."  
But the other swiftly strode from  
ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking,  
as he walk'd,  
Larger than human on the frozen  
hills.  
He heard the deep behind him, and a  
cry  
Before. His own thought drove him  
like a goad.  
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy  
caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left  
and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him,  
as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that  
rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed  
heels—  
And on a sudden, lo ! the level  
lake,  
And the long glories of the winter  
moon.

Then saw they how there hove a  
dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to  
stern,  
Beneath them ; and descending they  
were ware  
That all the decks were dense with  
stately forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a  
dream—by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold—  
and from them rose  
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling  
stars,  
And, as it were one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that  
shrieks  
All night in a waste land, where no  
one comes,

Or hath come, since the making of  
the world.  
Then murmur'd Arthur, " Place  
me in the barge."  
And to the barge they came. There  
those three Queens  
Put forth their hands, and took the  
King, and wept.  
But she, that rose the tallest of them  
all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
chafed his hands,  
And call'd him by his name, com-  
plaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his  
brow  
Striped with dark blood : for all his  
face was white  
And colourless, and like the wither'd  
moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the  
springing east ;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd  
with drops  
Of onset ; and the light and lustrous  
curls —  
That made his forehead like a rising  
sun  
High from the dais-throne —were  
parch'd with dust ;  
Or, clotted into points and hanging  
loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
fringed his lips.  
So like a shatter'd column lay the  
King ;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance  
in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tourna-  
ment,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and  
charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.  
Then loudly cried the bold Sir  
Bedivere,  
" Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall  
I go ?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and  
my eyes ?  
For now I see the true old times are  
dead,  
When every morning brought a noble  
chance,

And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
 Such times have been not since the light that led The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
 Which was an image of the mighty world ;  
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
 And the days darken round me, and the years,  
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds."  
 And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge :  
 "The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
 Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?  
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
 May He within himself make pure, but thou,  
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day,  
 For what are men better than sheep or goats  
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
 Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?  
 For so the whole round earth is every way  
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God,  
 But now farewell. I am going a long way  
 With them thou seest, if indeed I go—  
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
 To the island-valley of Avilion ;

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
 Revolving many memories, till the hull  
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

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Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long  
 Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell :  
 At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,  
 And waked with silence, grunted "Good ! " but we  
 Sat rapt : it was the tone with which he read—  
 Perhaps some modern touches here and there  
 Redem'd it from the charge of nothingness—  
 Or else we loved the man, and prized his work ;  
 I know not : but we sitting, as I said, The cock crew loud ; as at that time of year  
 The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :  
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,  
 " There now—that's nothing ! " drew a little back,  
 And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,

That sent a blast of sparkles up the  
flue :  
And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I  
seem'd  
To sail with Arthur under looming  
shores,  
Point after point ; till on to dawn,  
when dreams  
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
To me, methought, who waited with  
a crowd,  
There came a bark that, blowing for-  
ward, bore  
King Arthur, like a modorn gentleman  
Of stateliest port ; and all the people  
cried,  
" Arthur is come again : he cannot  
die."

Then those that stood upon the hills  
behind  
Repeated—" come again, and thrice  
as fair ; "  
And, further inland, voices echoed—  
" come  
With all good things, and war shall be  
no more."

At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and  
heard indeed  
The clear church-bells ring in the  
Christmas morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER ;  
OR, THE PICTURES

THIS morning is the morning of the  
day,  
When I and Eustace from the city  
went  
To see the Gardener's Daughter ; I  
and he,  
Brothers in Art ; a friendship so com-  
plete  
Portion'd in halves between us, that  
we grew  
The fable of the city where we dwelt.  
My Eustace might have sat for Hor-  
cules ;  
So muscular he spread, so broad of  
breast.  
He, by some law that holds in love,  
and draws  
The greater to the lesser, long desired

A certain miracle of symmetry,  
A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summ'd up and closed in little ;—  
Juliet, she  
So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh,  
she  
To me myself, for some three careless  
moons,  
The sunnier pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing ! Know  
you not  
Such touches are but embassies of  
love,  
To tamper with the feelings, ere he  
found  
Empire for life ? but Eustace painted  
her,  
And said to me, she sitting with us  
then,  
" When will you paint like this ? "  
and I replied,  
(My words were half in earnest, half  
in jest.)  
" Tis not your work, but Love's.  
Love, unperceived,  
A more ideal Artist he than all,  
Came, drew your pencil from you,  
made those eyes  
Darker than darkest pansies, and  
that hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front  
of March."  
And Juliet answer'd laughing, " Go  
and see  
The Gardener's daughter : trust me,  
after that,  
You scarce can fail to match his  
masterpiece."  
And up we rose, and on the spur we  
went.  
Not wholly in the busy world, nor  
quite  
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I  
love.  
News from the humming city comes  
to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage  
bells ;  
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves,  
you hear  
The windy clangling of the minster  
clock ;  
Although between it and the garden  
lies

A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,  
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,  
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on, Barge-hulen, to three arches of a bridge  
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,  
And all about the large lime feathers low,  
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,  
Grew, seldom seen : not less among us lived  
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard  
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter ? Where was he,  
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
That, having seen, forgot ? The common mouth,  
So gross to express delight, in praise of her  
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
Would play with flying forms and images,  
Yet this is also true, that, long before I look'd upon her, when I heard her name  
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,  
That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,  
Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul ;  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm  
To one that travels quickly, made the air

Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,  
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream  
Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,  
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
For ever in itself the day we went  
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,  
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud  
Drew downward : but all else of Heaven was pure  
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,  
And May with me from head to heel.  
And now,  
As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were  
The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,  
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these,) Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,  
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,  
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,  
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods  
Came voices of the well-contented doves.  
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,  
But shook his song together as he near'd  
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,  
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills ;  
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm ;  
The redcap whistled ; and the night- ingale  
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.  
And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,

" Hear how the bushes echo ! by my life,  
 These birds have joyful thoughts.  
 Think you they sing  
 Like poets, from the vanity of song ?  
 Or have they any sense of why they sing ?  
 And would they praise the heavens for what they have ? "  
 And I made answer, " Were there nothing else  
 For which to praise the heavens but only love,  
 That only love were cause enough for praise."  
 Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,  
 And on we went ; but ere an hour had pass'd,  
 We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North ;  
 Down which a well-worn pathway courted us  
 To one green wicket in a privet hedge ;  
 This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk  
 Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned ;  
 And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew  
 Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.  
 The garden stretches southward. In the midst  
 A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.  
 The garden-glasses shone, and momently  
 The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.  
 " Eustace," I said, " This wonder keeps the house."  
 He nodded, but a moment afterwards  
 He cried, " Look ! look ! " Before he ceased I turn'd,  
 And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.  
 For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,  
 That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,  
 And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—

Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—  
 Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.  
 A single stream of all her soft brown hair  
 Pour'd on one side : the shadow of the flowers  
 Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering  
 Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—  
 Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering down,  
 But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced  
 The greensward into greener circles, dipt,  
 And mix'd with shadows of the common ground !  
 But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd  
 Her violet eyes, and all her Hebrew bloom,  
 And doubled his own warmth against her lips,  
 And on the bounteous wave of such a breast  
 As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,  
 She stood, a sight to make an old man young.  
 So rapt, we near'd the house ; but she, a Rose  
 In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,  
 Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd  
 Into the world without ; till close at hand,  
 And almost ere I knew mine own intent,  
 This murmur broke the stillness of that air  
 Which brooded round about her :  
 " Ah, one rose,  
 One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,  
 Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips  
 Less exquisite than thine." She look'd : but all  
 Suffused with blushes—neither self-possess'd

Nor startled, but betwixt this mood  
and that,  
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,  
And dropt the branch she held, and  
turning, wound  
Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd  
her lips  
For some sweet answer, tho' no  
answer came,  
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted  
it,  
And moved away, and left me, statue-  
like,  
In act to render thanks.  
I, that whole day,  
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd  
there  
Till every daisy slept, and Love's  
white star  
Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in  
the dusk.  
So home we went, and all the live-  
long way  
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter  
me.  
"Now," said he, "will you climb the  
top of Art.  
You cannot fail but work in hues to  
dim  
The Titanic Flora. Will you match  
My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master,  
Love,  
A more ideal Artist he than  
all."  
So home I went, but could not sleep  
for joy,  
Reading her perfect features in the  
gloom,  
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er  
and o'er,  
And shaping faithful record of the  
glance  
That graced the giving—such a noise  
of life  
Swarm'd in the golden present, such a  
voice  
Call'd to me from the years to come,  
and such  
A length of bright horizon rimm'd the  
dark.  
And all that night I heard the watch-  
men peal  
The sliding season: all that night I  
heard  
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy  
hours.  
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all  
good,  
O'er the mute city stole with folded  
wings,  
Distilling odours on me as they went  
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.  
Love at first sight, first-born, and  
heir to all,  
Made this night thus. Henceforward  
squall nor storm  
Could keep me from that Eden where  
she dwelt.  
Light pretexts drew me: sometimes  
a Dutch love  
For tulips; then for roses, moss or  
musk,  
To grace my city-rooms; or fruits  
and cream  
Served in the weeping elm; and more  
and more  
A word could bring the colour to my  
cheek;  
A thought would fill my eyes with  
happy dew;  
Love trebled life within me, and with  
each  
The year increased.  
The daughters of the year,  
One after one, thro' that still garden  
pass'd:  
Each garlanded with her peculiar  
flower  
Danced into light, and died into the  
shade;  
And each in passing touch'd with  
some new grace  
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day  
by day,  
Like one that never can be wholly  
known,  
Her beauty grew; till Autumn  
brought an hour  
For Eustace, when I heard his deep  
"I will,"  
Breathed, like the covenant of a God,  
to hold.  
From thence thro' all the worlds:  
but I rose up  
Full of his bliss, and following her  
dark eyes  
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I  
reach'd

The wicket-gate, and found her  
standing there.  
There sat we down upon a garden  
mound,  
Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the  
third,  
Between us, in the circle of his arms  
Enwound us both ; and over many a  
rango  
Of waning lime the gray cathedral  
towers,  
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
Reveal'd their shining windows :  
from them clash'd  
The bells ; we listen'd ; with the  
time we play'd ;  
We spoke of other things : we  
coursed about  
The subject most at heart, more near  
and near,  
Like doves about a dovecote, wheel-  
ing round  
The central wish, until we settled  
there.  
Then, in that time and place, I  
spoke to her,  
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine  
own,  
Yet for the pleasure that I took to  
hear,  
Requiring at her hand the greatest  
gift,  
A woman's heart, the heart of her I  
loved ;  
And in that time and place she  
answer'd me,  
And in the compass of three little  
words,  
More musical than ever came in one  
The silver fragments of a broken  
voice,  
Made me most happy, faltering " I  
am thine."  
Shall I cease here ? Is this  
enough to say  
That my desire, like all strongest  
hopes,  
By its own energy fulfil'd itself,  
Merged in completion ? Would you  
learn at full  
How passion rose thro' circumstan-  
tial grades  
Beyond all grades develop'd ? and  
indeed

I had not staid so long to tell you  
all,  
But while I mused came Memory  
with sad eyes,  
Holding the folded annals of my  
youth ;  
And while I mused, Love with knit  
brows went by,  
And with a flying finger swept my  
lips,  
And spake, " Be wise : not easily  
forgiven  
Are those, who setting wide the  
doors, that bar  
The secret bridal chambers of the  
heart,  
Let in the day." Here, then, my  
words have end.  
Yet might I tell of meetings, of  
farewells—  
Of that which came between, more  
sweet than each,  
In whispers, like the whispers of the  
leaves  
That tremble round a nightingale—  
in sighs  
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for  
utterance,  
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might  
I not tell  
Of difference, reconciliation, pledges  
given,  
And vows, where there was never  
need of vows,  
And kisses, where the heart on one  
wild leap  
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as  
above  
The heavens between their fairy  
sleeces pale  
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with  
fleeting stars ;  
Or while the balmy glooming, cres-  
cent-lit,  
Spread the light haze along the  
river-shores,  
And in the hollows ; or as once we  
met  
Unheeded, tho' beneath a whisper-  
ing rain  
Night slid down one long stream of  
sighing wind,  
And in her bosom bore the baby,  
Sleep.

But this whole hour your eycs  
have been intent  
On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for  
what it holds  
May not be dwelt on by the common  
day.  
This prelude has prepared thee,  
Raise thy soul;  
Make thine heart ready with thine  
eycs: the time  
Is come to raise the veil.  
Behold her there,  
As I beheld her ere she knew my  
heart,  
My first, last love; the idol of my  
youth,  
The darling of my manhood, and,  
alas!  
Now the most blessed memory of  
mine age.

## DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode  
William and Dora. William was his  
son,  
And she his niece. He often look'd  
at them,  
And often thought " I'll make them  
man and wife."  
Now Dora tell her uncle's will in all,  
And yearn'd towards William; but  
the youth, because  
He had been always with her in the  
house,  
Thought not of Dora.  
Then there came a day  
When Allan call'd his son, and said,  
" My son:  
I married late, but I would wish to see  
My grandchild on my knees before I  
die:  
And I have set my heart upon a  
match.  
Now therefore look to Dora; she is  
well  
To look to; thrifty too beyond her  
age.  
She is my brother's daughter: he  
and I  
Had once hard words, and parted,  
and he died  
In foreign lands; but for his sake I  
bred

His daughter Dora: take her for  
your wife;  
For I have wish'd this marriage,  
night and day,  
For many years." But William  
answer'd short;  
" I cannot marry Dora; by my life,  
I will not marry Dora." Then the  
old man  
Was wroth, and doubled up his  
hands, and said:  
" You will not, boy! you dare to  
answer thus!  
But in my time a father's word was  
law,  
And so it shall be now for me.  
Look to it;  
Consider, William: take a month to  
think,  
And let me have an answer to my  
wish;  
Or, by the Lord that made me, you  
shall pack,  
And never more darken my doors  
again."  
But William answer'd madly; bit  
his lips,  
And broke away. The more he  
look'd at her  
The less he liked her; and his ways  
were harsh;  
But Dora bore them meekly. Then  
before  
The month was out he left his  
father's house,  
And hired himself to work within the  
fields;  
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd  
and wed  
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.  
Then, when the bells were ringing,  
Allan call'd  
His niece and said: " My girl, I  
love you well;  
But if you speak with him that was  
my son,  
Or change a word with her he calls  
his wife,  
My home is none of yours. My will  
is law."  
And Dora promised, being meek.  
She thought,  
" It cannot be: my uncle's mind will  
change!"

And days went on, and there was  
born a boy  
To William ; then distresses came  
on him ;  
And day by day he pass'd his father's  
gate,  
Heart-broken, and his father help'd  
him not.  
But Dora stored what little she could  
save,  
And sent it them by stealth, nor did  
they know  
Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he  
died.  
Then Dora went to Mary. Mary  
sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy,  
and thought  
Hard things of Dora. Dora came  
and said :  
" I have obey'd my uncle until  
now,  
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro'  
me  
This evil came on William at the first.  
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's  
gone,  
And for your sake, the woman that  
he chose,  
And for this orphan, I am come to  
you :  
You know there has not been for  
these five years  
So full a harvest : let me take the boy,  
And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
Among the wheat ; that when his  
heart is glad  
Of the full harvest, he may see the  
boy,  
And bless him for the sake of him  
that's gone."  
And Dora took the child, and went  
her way  
Across the wheat, and sat upon a  
mound  
That was unsown, where many  
poppies grew.  
Far off the farmer came into the  
field  
And spied her not ; for none of all  
his men  
Dare tell him Dora waited with the  
child ;

And Dora would have risen and gone  
to him,  
But her heart fail'd her ; and the  
reapers reap'd,  
And the sun fell, and all the land  
was dark.  
But when the morrow came, she  
rose and took  
The child once more, and sat upon  
the mound ;  
And made a little wreath of all the  
flowers  
That grew about, and tied it round  
his hat  
To make him pleasing in her uncle's  
eye.  
Then when the farmer pass'd into the  
field  
He spied her, and he left his men at  
work,  
And came and said : " Where were  
yon yesterday ?  
Whose child is that ! What are you  
doing here ? "  
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
And answered softly, " This is  
William's child ! "  
" And did I not," said Allan, " did I  
not  
Forbid you, Dora ? " Dora said  
again ;  
" Do with me as you will, but take  
the child  
And bless him for the sake of him  
that's gone ! "  
And Allan said, " I see it is a trick  
Got up betwixt you and the woman  
there.  
I must be taught my duty, and by  
you !  
You know my word was law, and yet  
you dared  
To slight it. Well—for I will take  
the boy ;  
But go you hence, and never see me  
more."  
So saying, he took the boy, that  
cried aloud  
And struggled hard. The wreath  
of flowers fell  
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her  
hands,  
And the boy's cry came to her from  
the field.

More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,  
Remembering the day when first she came,  
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down  
And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,  
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.  
Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood  
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise  
To God, that help'd her in her widow-hood.  
And Dora said, "My uncle took the boy;  
But, Mary, let me live and work with you;  
He says that he will never see me more."  
Then answer'd Mary, "This shall never be,  
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:  
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,  
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight  
His mother; therefore thou and I will go,  
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;  
And I will beg of him to take thee back;  
But if he will not take thee back again,  
Then thou and I will live within one house,  
And work for William's child, until he grows  
Of age to help us."

So the women kiss'd each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.

The door was off the latch: they peep'd, and saw the boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,

Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,

And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,  
Like one that loved him; and the lad stretch'd out  
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung  
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.  
Then they came in: but when the boy beheld  
His mother, he cried out to come to her:  
And Allan set him down, and Mary said:  
"O Father!—if you let me call you so—  
I never came a-begging for myself, or William, or this child; but now I come  
For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.  
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace  
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,  
He could not ever rue his marrying me—  
I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said  
That he was wrong to cross his father thus:  
"God bless him!" he said, 'and may he never know  
The troubles I have gone thro'!' Then he turn'd  
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!  
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you  
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight  
His father's memory; and take Dora back,  
And let all this be as it was before."  
So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
By Mary. There was silence in the room;  
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—  
"I have been to blame—to blame.  
I have kill'd my son,  
I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.

## AUDLEY COURT

May God forgive me!—I have been  
to blame.  
Kiss me, my children."

Then they clung about  
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him  
many times.

And all the man was broken with  
remorse;

And all his love came back a hundred-  
fold;

And for three hours he sobb'd o'er  
William's child,  
Thinking of William.

So those four abode  
Within one house together; and as  
years  
Went forward, Mary took another  
mate;

But Dora lived unmarried till her  
death.

## AUDLEY COURT

"THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd,  
and not a room  
For love or money. Let us picnic  
there

At Audley Court."

I spoke, while Audley feast  
Humm'd like a hive all round the  
narrow quay,  
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the  
boat,  
And breathing of the sea. "With  
all my heart,"

Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd  
thro' the swarm,  
And rounded by the stillness of the  
beach  
To where the bay runs up its latest  
horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly  
lipp'd

The flat red granite; so by many a  
sweep  
Of meadow smooth from aftermaul  
we reach'd

The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd  
thro' all

The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,

And cross'd the garden to the gar-  
dener's lodge,  
With all its casements bedded, and  
its walls  
And chimneys muffled in the leafy  
vine.

There, on a slope of orchard,  
Francis laid  
A damask napkin wrought with horse  
and hound,  
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt  
of home,

And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-  
made,  
Where quail and pigeon, lark and  
leveret lay,  
Like fossils of the rock, with golden  
yolks

Imbedded and injellied; last, with  
these,

A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
Prime, which I knew; and so we  
sat and eat

And talk'd old matters over; who  
was dead,  
Who married, who was like to be,  
and how

The races went, and who would rent  
the hall:

Then touch'd upon the game, how  
scarce it was

This season; glancing thence, dis-  
cuss'd the farm,  
The four-field system, and the price  
of grain;

And struck upon the corn-laws,  
where we split,

And came again together on the king  
With heated faces; till he laugh'd  
aloud;

And, while the blackbird on the pippin  
hung

To hear him, clapt his hand in mine  
and sang—

"Oh! who would fight and march  
and countermarch,  
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,  
And shovell'd up into a bloody trench  
Where no one knows? but let me live  
my life.

"Oh! who would cast and balance  
at a desk,  
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd  
stool,

Till all his juice is dried, and all his  
joints  
Are full of chalk? but let me live  
my life.

"Who'd serve the state? for if  
I carved my name

Upon the cliffs that guard my native  
land,

I might as well have traced it in the  
sands;

The sea wastes all: but let me live  
my life.

"Oh! who would love? I wo'd  
a woman once,

But she was sharper than an eastern  
wind,

And all my heart turn'd from her, as  
a thorn

Turns from the sea: but let me live  
my life."

He sang his song, and I replied  
with mine:

I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir  
Robert's pride,

His books - the more the pity, so I  
said—

Came to the hammer here in March—  
and this—

I set the words, and added names I  
knew.

"Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and  
dream of me:

Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's  
arm,

And sleeping, haply dream her arm  
is mine.

"Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's  
arm;

Emilia, fairer than all else but  
'thou,

For thou art fairer than all else that is.

"Sleep, breathing health and  
peace upon her breast:

Sleep, breathing love and trust against  
her lip:

I go to-night: I come to-morrow  
morn.

"I go, but I return: I would I  
were

The pilot of the darkness and the  
dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream  
of me."

So sang we each to either, Francis  
Hale,

The father's son who lived across the  
bay,

My friend; and I, that having where-  
withal,

And in the fallow leisure of my life  
A rolling stone of here and every-  
where,

Did what I would; but ere the night  
we rose

And saunter'd home beneath a moon,  
that, just

In crescent, dimly rain'd about the  
leaf

Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
The limit of the hills; and as we  
sank

From rock to rock upon the gloomy  
quay,

The town was hush'd beneath us:  
lower down

The bay was oily-calm; the har-  
bour-buoy

With one green sparkle ever and anon  
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at  
heart.

### WALKING TO THE MAIL

*John.* I'm glad I walk'd. How  
fresh the meadows look  
Above the river, and, but a month  
ago,

The whole hill-side was redder than a  
fox.

Is yon plantation where this byway  
joins

The turnpike?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this  
come by?

*James.* The mail? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is  
that I see?

No, not the County Member's with  
the vane:

Up higher with the yewtree by it, and  
half

A score of gables.

*James.* That? Sir Edward

## WALKING TO THE MAIL

Head's: But he's abroad : the place  
is to be sold.

John. Oh, his. He was not  
broken.

James. No, sir, he,  
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his  
blood  
That veil'd the world with jaundice,  
hid his face  
From all men, and commerced with  
himself,  
He lost the sense that handles daily  
life—  
That keeps us all in order more or  
less—  
And sick of home went overseas for  
change.

John. And whither?

James. Nay, who knows? he's  
here and there.  
But let him go; his devil goes with  
him,  
As well as with his tenant, Jocky  
Dawes.

John. What's that?

James. You saw the man—  
on Monday, was it?—  
There by the humpback'd willow;  
half stands up,  
And bristles; half has fall'n and  
made a bridge;  
And there he caught the younker  
ticking trout—  
Caught in *flagrante*—what's the Latin  
word?—

*Delicio*: but his house, for so they say,  
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that  
shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt  
at doors,  
And rummaged like a rat: no servant  
stay'd:

The farmer vext packs up his beds  
and chairs,  
And all his household stuff; and with  
his boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the  
tilt,

Sets out, and meets a friend who hails  
him, "What!

You're flitting!" "Yes, we're flit-  
ting," says the ghost.

(For they had pack'd the thing among  
the beds.)

"Oh well," says he, "you flitting  
with us too—  
Jack, turn the horses' heads and home  
again."

John. He left his wife behind; for  
so I heard.

James. He left her, yes. I met  
my lady once;  
A woman like a butt, and harsh as  
crabs.

John. Oh yet but I remember,  
ten years back—

"Tis now at least ten years—and then  
she was—

You could not light upon a sweeter  
thing:

A body slight and round, and like a  
pear  
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a  
foot  
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a  
skin

As clean and white as privet when it  
flowers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades,  
and they that loved  
At first like dove and dove were cat  
and dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager,  
Out of her sphere. What betwixt  
shame and pride,

Now things and old, himself and  
her, she sour'd  
To what she is: a nature never  
kind!

Like men, like manners: like breeds  
like, they say.

Kind nature is the best: those man-  
ners next

That fit us like a nature second-hand;  
Which are indeed the manners of the  
great.

John. But I had heard it was this  
bill that past,

And fear of change at home, that  
drove him hence.

James. That was the last drop in  
the cup of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff  
brought

A Chartist pike. You should have  
seen him wince

As from a venomous thing: he  
thought himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a  
cry  
Should break his sleep by night, and  
his nice eyes  
Should see the raw mechanic's bloody  
thumbs  
Sweat on his blazon'd chairs ; but,  
sir, you know  
That these two parties still divide  
the world—  
Of those that want, and those that  
have : and still  
The same old sore breaks out from  
age to age  
With much the same result. Now I  
myself,  
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy  
Destructive, when I had not what I  
would.  
I was at school—a college in the  
South :  
There lived a flayflint near ; we stole  
his fruit,  
His hens, his eggs ; but there was law  
for us ;  
We paid in person. He had a sow,  
sir. She,  
With meditative grunts of much  
content,  
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun  
and mud.  
By night we dragg'd her to the college  
tower  
From her warm bed, and up the cork-  
screw stair  
With hand and rope we haled the  
groaning sow,  
And on the leads we kept her till she  
pigg'd.  
Large range of prospect had the  
nother sow,  
And but for daily loss of one she  
loved,  
As one by one we took them—but for  
this—  
As never sow was higher in this  
world—  
Might have been happy : but what  
lot is pure ?  
We took them all, till she was left  
alone  
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
And so return'd unarrow'd to her sty.  
*John.* They found you out ?

*James.* Not they.  
*John.* Well—after all—  
What know we of the secret of a  
man ?  
His nerves were wrong. What ails  
us, who are sound,  
That we should mimic this raw fool  
the world,  
Which charts us all in its coarse blacks  
or whites,  
As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows  
To Pity—more from ignorance than  
will.  
But put your best foot forward, or  
I fear  
That we shall miss the mail : and  
here it comes  
With five at top : as quaint a four-in-  
hand  
As you shall see—three dyebalds and  
a roan.

## EDWIN MORRIS; OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the  
lake,  
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters  
of a year,  
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth  
Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :  
See here, my doing : curves of moun-  
tain, bridge,  
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
When men knew how to build, upon a  
rock,  
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock :  
And here, new-comers in an ancient  
hold,  
New-comers from the Mersey, mil-  
lionaires,  
Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chim-  
nied bulk  
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of  
bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the  
lake  
With Edwin Morris and with Edward  
Bull  
The curate ; he was fatter than his  
cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew  
the names,  
Long learned names of agaric, moss  
and fern,  
Who forged a thousand theories of the  
rocks,  
Who taught me how to skate, to row,  
to swim,  
Who read me rhymes elaborately  
good,  
His own—I call'd him Crichton, for  
he seem'd  
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early  
life,  
And his first passion; and he an-  
swer'd me;  
And well his words became him: was  
he not  
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
Stored from all flowers? Poet-like  
he spoke.

“ My love for Nature is as old as I;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to  
that,  
And three rich sunnights more, my  
love for her.  
My love for Nature and my love for  
her,  
Of different ages, like twin-sisters  
grew,  
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.  
To some full music rose and sank  
the sun,  
And some full music seem'd to move  
and change  
With all the varied changes of the  
dark,  
And either twilight and the day be-  
tween;  
For daily hope fulfil'd, to rise again  
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it  
sweet  
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to  
breathe.”

Or this or something like to this he  
spoke.  
Then said the fat-faced curate Ed-  
ward Bull,  
“ I take it, God made the woman  
for the man.

And for the good and increase of the  
world.  
A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors, that trims  
us up,  
And keeps us tight; but these unreal  
ways  
Seem but the theme of writers, and  
indeed  
Worn threadbare. Man is made of  
solid stuff.  
I say, God made the woman for the  
man,  
And for the good and increase of the  
world.”

“ Parson,” said I, “ you pitch the  
pipe too low:  
But I have sudden touches, and can  
run  
My faith beyond my practice into  
his:  
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
I scarce hear of her music: yet say on.  
What should one give to light on such  
a dream?”  
I ask'd him half-sardonically.

“ Give ?  
Give all thou art,” he answer'd, and  
a light  
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy  
cheek;  
“ I would have hid her needle in my  
heart,  
To save her little finger from a  
scratch  
No deeper than the skin: my ears  
could hear  
Her lightest breaths: her least  
remark was worth  
The experience of the wise. I went  
and came;  
Her voice fled always thro' the sum-  
mer land;  
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-  
happy days!  
The flower of each, those moments  
when we met,  
The crown of all, we met to part no  
more.”

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
To take them as I did ? but something jarr'd ;  
Whether he spoke too largely ; that there seem'd  
A touch of something false, some self-conceit,  
Or over-smoothness : howsoe'er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humour, and I said :

" Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone  
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,  
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left ?  
But you can talk : yours is a kindly vein :  
I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as much within ;  
Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,  
That like a purple beech among the greens  
Looks out of place : 'tis from no want in her :  
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
Or something of a wayward modern mind  
Dissecting passion. Time will set me right."

So spoke I knowing not the things that were.  
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull :  
" God made the woman for the use of man,  
And for the good and increase of the world."  
And I and Edwin laugh'd ; and now we paused  
About the windings of the marge to hear  
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms  
And alders, garden-isles ; and now we left  
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran

By ripply shallows of the lisping lake,  
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,  
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him  
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.  
'Tis true, we met ; one hour I had, no more :  
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,  
The close " Your Letty, only yours ; " and this  
Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn  
Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
My craft aground, and heard with beating heart  
The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel ;  
And out I stept, and up I crept : she moved,  
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers :  
Then low and sweet I whistled thrice ; and she,  
She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I breathed  
In some new planet : a silent cousin stole  
Upon us and departed : " Leave " she cried,  
" O Leave me ! " " Never, dearest, never : here  
I brave the worst : " and while we stood like fools  
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs.  
And poodles yell'd within, and out they came  
Trustees and Aunts and Uncles.  
" What, with him !  
Go " (shril'd the cottonspinning chorus) " him ! "  
I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen " Him ! "  
Again with hands of wild rejection  
" Go ! —  
Girl, get you in ! " She went—and in one month

They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,  
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile  
And educated whisker. But for me,  
They set an ancient creditor to work :  
It seems I broke a close with force and arms :  
There came a mystic token from the king  
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy !  
I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd :  
Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below :  
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the storm ;  
So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear ? perhaps : yet long ago  
I have pardon'd little Letty ; not indeed,  
It may be, for her own dear sake but this,  
She seems a part of those fresh days to me ;  
For in the dust and drouth of London life  
She moves among my visions of the lake,  
While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then  
While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

## ST. SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,  
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet  
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,

I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and sob,  
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,  
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.  
Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,  
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,  
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,  
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow ;  
And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
Thou wouldest have caught me up into thy rest,  
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.  
O take the meaning, Lord : I do not breathe,  
Not whisper, any murmur of complaint,  
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still  
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd  
My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,  
For I was strong and hale of body then ;  
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,  
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard  
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,

I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound	For not alone this pillar-punish- ment,
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw	Not this alone I bore: but while I lived
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.	In the white convent down the valley there,
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh;	For many weeks about my loins I wore
I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf I am,	The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum	Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose;
About the column's base, and almost blind,	And spake not of it to a single soul, Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin, Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
And scarce can recognise the fields I know;	My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;	I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,	Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,	I lived up there on yonder mountain side.
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,	My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay
I have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.	Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,	Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?	Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?	Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.	Except the spare chance-gift of those that came
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?	To touch my body and be heal'd, and live:
For either they were stoned, or crucified,	And they say then that I work'd miracles,
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn	Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here	Cured lameness, palsies, cancers.
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.	Thou, O God,
Bear witness, if I could have found a way	Knowest alone whether this was or no.
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)	Have mercy, mercy: cover all my sin.
More slowly-painful to subdue this home	Then, that I might be more alone with thee,
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,	Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
I had not stinted practice, O my God.	Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;

And twice three years I crouch'd on  
one that rose  
Twenty by measure; last of all, I  
grew  
Twice ten long weary weary years  
to this,  
That numbers forty cubits from the  
soil.  
I think that I have borne as much  
as this—  
Or else I dream—and for so long a  
time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow  
light,  
And this high dial, which my sorrow  
crowns—  
So much—even so.  
And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and  
say,  
" Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast  
suffer'd long  
For ages and for ages!" then they  
prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone  
throu',  
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I  
fall,  
Maybe for months, in such blind  
lethargies,  
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time  
are choked.

But yet

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and  
all the saints  
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and  
men on earth  
House in the shade of comfortable  
roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat whole-  
some food,  
And wear warm clothes, and even  
beasts have stalls,  
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of  
the light,  
Bow down one thousand and two  
hundred times,  
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the  
Saints;  
Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake: the chill stars sparkle; I am  
wet  
With drenching dews, or stiff with  
crackling frost.

I wear an undress'd goatskin on my  
back;  
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the  
cross,  
And strive and wrestle with thee till  
I die:  
O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin.  
O Lord, thou knowest what a man  
I am;  
A sinful man, conceived and born in  
sin:  
'Tis their own doing; this is none of  
mine;  
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for  
this,  
That here come those that worship  
me? Ha! ha!  
They think that I am somewhat.  
What am I?  
The silly people take me for a saint,  
And bring me offerings of fruit and  
flowers:  
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness  
here)  
Have all in all endured as much, and  
more  
Than many just and holy men, whose  
names  
Are register'd and calendar'd for  
saints.  
Good people, you do ill to kneel to  
me.  
What is it I can have done to merit  
this?  
I am a sinner viler than you all.  
It may be I have wrought some  
miracles,  
And cured some halt and maim'd;  
but what of that?  
It may be, no one, even among the  
saints,  
May match his pains with mine; but  
what of that?  
Yet do not rise: for you may look on  
me,  
And in your looking you may kneel  
to God.  
Speak! is there any of you halt or  
maim'd?  
I think you know I have some power  
with Heaven  
From my long penance: let him speak  
his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me,  
They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark ! they shout  
" St. Simeon Styliates." Why, if so,  
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,  
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
Can I work miracles and not be saved?  
This is not told of any. They were saints.  
It cannot be but that I shall be saved;  
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout,  
" Behold a saint ! "  
And lower voices saunt me from above.  
Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chrysalis  
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death  
Spreads more and more and more,  
that God hath now  
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all  
My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,  
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname Styliates, among men ; I, Simeon, The watcher on the column till the end ;  
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes ;  
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become  
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now From my high nest of penance here proclaim  
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,  
A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath  
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve ;  
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
I smote them with the cross ; they swarm'd again  
In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest :  
They flapp'd my light out as I read : I saw  
Their faces grow between me and my book :

With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine  
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,  
And by this way I 'scaped them.  
Mortify  
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns ;  
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast  
Whole Lent, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,  
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,  
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still  
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise :  
God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,  
Among the powers and princes of this world,  
To make me an example to mankind,  
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say  
But that a time may come—yea, even now,  
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs  
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
When you may worship me without reproach ;  
For I will leave my relics in your land,  
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,  
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,  
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.  
While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain  
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,  
In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
These heavy, horny eyes. The end ! the end !  
Surely the end ! What's here ? a shape, a shade,  
A flash of light. Is that the angel there

That holds a crown ? Come, blessed brother, come.  
I know thy glittering face. I waited long ;  
My brows are ready. What ! deny it now ?  
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ !  
'Tis gone : 'tis here again ; the crown ! the crown !  
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
Sweet ! sweet ! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.  
Ah ! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints : I trust  
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.  
Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,  
Among you there, and let him presently  
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
And climbing up into my airy home,  
Deliver me the blessed sacrament ;  
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
A quarter before twelve.  
But thou, O Lord,  
Aid all this foolish people ; let them take  
Example, pattern : lead them to thy light.

## THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls ;  
Once more before my face  
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
That stand within the chace.  
Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
Beneath its drift of smoke ;  
And ah ! with what delighted eyes  
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
Ere that, which in me burn'd,

The love, that makes me thrice a man,  
Could hope itself return'd ;

To yonder oak within the field  
I spoke without restraint,  
And with a larger faith appeal'd  
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
And told him of my choice,  
Until he plagiarised a heart,  
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd, under Heaven  
None else could understand ;  
I found him garrulously given,  
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
Is many a weary hour ;  
'Twere well to question him, and try  
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,  
Whose topmost branches can discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
If ever maid or spouse,  
As fair as my Olivia, came  
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

“ O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
Whatever maiden grace  
The good old Summers, year by year,  
Made ripe in Sumner-chace :

“ Old Summers, when the monk was fat,  
And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
The girls upon the cheek,

“ Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
And number'd bead, and shrift,  
Bluff Harry broke into the spence,  
And turn'd the cowls adrift :

“ And I have seen some score of those  
Fresh faces, that would thrive

When his man-minded offset rose  
To chase the deer at five ;

“ And all that from the town would  
stroll,  
Till that wild wind made work  
In which the gloomy brewer’s soul  
Went by me, like a stork :

“ The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
And others, passing praise,  
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
For puritanic stays :

“ And I have shadow’d many a group  
Of beauties, that were born  
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn ;

“ And, leg and arm with love-knots  
gay,  
About me leap’d and laugh’d  
The modish Cupid of the day,  
And shrill’d his tinsel shaft.

“ I swear (and else may insects prick  
Each leaf into a gall)  
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
Is three times worth them all ;

“ For those and theirs, by Nature’s  
law,  
Have faded long ago ;  
But in these latter springs I saw  
Your own Olivia blow,

“ From when she gamboll’d on the  
greens,  
A baby-germ, to when  
The maiden blossoms of her teens  
Could number five from ten.

“ I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,  
(And hear me with thine ears,)  
That, tho’ I circle in the grain  
Five hundred rings of years—

“ Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass :

“ For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh,

I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.”

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chase ;  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft hast heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs.

“ O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town ;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.

“ And with him Albert came on his,  
I look’d at him with joy :  
As cowslip unto oxlip is,  
So seems she to the boy.

“ An hour had past—and, sitting  
straight  
Within the low-wheel’d chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays.

“ But, as for her, she stay’d at home,  
And on the roof she went,  
And down the way you use to come,  
She look’d with discontent.

“ She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf ;  
She left the new piano shut :  
She could not please herself.

“ Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
And livelier than a lark  
She sent her voice thro’ all the holt  
Before her, and the park.

“ A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as might be would he cling  
About the darling child :

“ But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir,  
The flower, she touch’d on, dipt and  
rose,  
And turn’d to look at her.

" And here she came, and round me play'd,  
And sang to me the whole Of those three stanzas that you made About my 'giant bōle ;'

" And in a fit of frolic mirth She strove to span my waist :  
Alas, I was so broad of girth, I could not be embrac'd.

" I wish'd myself the fair young beech,  
That here beside me stands, That round me, clasping each in each, She might have lock'd her hands.

" Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet  
As woodbine's fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold."

O muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Sumner-chace !  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows  
When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

" O yes, she wander'd round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,  
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

" A teardrop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept.

" Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,  
She glanced across the plain ;  
But not a creature was in sight :  
She kiss'd me once again,

" Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
I hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr'd :

" And even into my inmost rind  
A pleasure I discern'd,  
Like those blind motions of the Spring,  
That show the year is turn'd.

" Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm—  
The cushion'd of whose touch may press  
The maiden's tender palm.

" I, rooted here among the groves,  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust :

" For ah ! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk.

" But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,

" She had not found me so remis ;  
But lightly issuing thro',  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss  
With usury thereto."

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,  
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well ;  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to toll.

" 'Tis little more : the day was warm.  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm,  
And at my feet she lay.

"Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Thro' all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

"I took the swarming sound of life—  
The music from the town—  
The murmurs of the drum and fife  
And lull'd them in my own.

"Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye;  
A second flutter'd round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly;

"A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ankle fine.

"Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadow'd all her rest—  
Dropt dews upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

"But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck'd it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dow.

"And yet it was a graceful gift—  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

"I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.  
He lies beside thee on the grass.  
O kiss him once for me.

"O kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss,  
For never yet was oak on tea  
Shall grow so fair as this."

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
Look further thro' the chace,  
Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
The front of Sunner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,  
That but a moment lay

Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,  
The warmth it thence shall win  
To riper life may magnetise  
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
Or lapse from hand to hand,  
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,  
Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
Thou art the fairest-spoken tree  
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery top  
All throats that gurgle sweet!  
All starry culmination drop  
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow—  
And while he sinks or swells  
The full south-breeze around thee blow  
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
That under deeply strikes!  
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
But, rolling as in sleep,  
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
That only by thy side  
Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,  
She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
And praise thee more in both  
Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,  
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
And mystic sentence spoke;  
And more than England honours  
that,  
Thy famous brother-oak,  
Wherin the younger Charles abode  
Till all the paths were dim,  
And far below the Roundhead rode,  
And humm'd a surly hymn.

## LOVE AND DUTY

Of love that never found his earthly  
close,  
What sequel? Streaming eyes and  
breaking hearts?  
Or all the same as if he had not been?  
Not so. Shall Error in the round  
of time  
Still father Truth? O shall the  
braggart shout  
For some blind glimpse of freedom  
work itself  
Thro' madness, hated by the wise,  
to law  
System and empire? Sin itself be  
found  
The cloudy porch oft opening on the  
Sun?  
And only he, this wonder, dead, be-  
come  
Mere highway dust? or year by year  
alone  
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of  
himself?  
If this were thus, if this, indeed,  
were all,  
Better the narrow brain, the stony  
heart,  
The staring eye glazed o'er with sap-  
less days,  
The long mechanic pacings to and fro  
The set gray life, and apathetic end.  
But am I not the nobler thro' thy  
love?  
O three times less unworthy! likewise  
thou  
Art more thro' Love, and greater  
than thy years.  
The Sun will run his orbit, and the  
Moon

Her circle. Wait, and Love himself  
will bring  
The drooping flower of knowledge  
changed to fruit  
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large  
in Time,  
And that which shapes it to some per-  
fect end.  
Will some one say, then why not ill  
for good?  
Why took ye not your pastime? To  
that man  
My work shall answer, since I knew  
the right  
And did it; for a man is not as God,  
But then most Godlike being most a  
man.  
—So let me think 'tis well for thee  
and me—  
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is  
mine  
Whose foresight preaches peace, my  
heart so slow  
To feel it! For how hard it seem'd  
to me,  
When eyes, love-languid thro' half-  
tears, would dwell  
One earnest, earnest moment upon  
mine,  
Then not to dare to see! when thy  
low voice,  
Faltering, would break its syllables,  
to keep  
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a  
leash,  
And not leap forth and fall about thy  
neck,  
And on thy bosom, (deep-desired  
relief!)  
Rain out the heavy mist of tears,  
that weigh'd  
Upon my brain, my senses and my  
soul!  
For Love himself took part against  
himself  
To warn us off, and Duty loved of  
Love—  
O this world's curse,—beloved but  
hated—came  
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace  
and mine,  
And crying, "Who is this? behold  
thy bride,"  
She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard  
To alien ears, I did not speak to  
these—  
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me :  
Hard is my doom, and thine : thou  
knowest it all.  
Could Love part thus ? was it not  
well to speak,  
To have spoken once ? It could not  
but be well.  
The slow sweet hours that bring us all  
things good,  
The slow sad hours that bring us  
all things ill,  
And all good things from evil, brought  
the night  
In which we sat together and alone,  
And to the want, that hollow'd all the  
heart,  
Gave utterance by the yearning of an  
eye,  
That burn'd upon its object thro'  
such tears  
As flow but once a life.  
The trance gave way  
To those caresses, when a hundred  
times  
In that last kiss, which never was the  
last,  
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived  
and died.  
Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and  
the words  
That make a man feel strong in  
speaking truth ;  
Till now the dark was worn, and over-  
head  
The lights of sunset and of sunrise  
mix'd  
In that brief night ; the summer  
night, that paused  
Among her stars to hear us ; stars that  
hung  
Love-charm'd to listen : all the wheels  
of Time  
Spun round in station, but the end  
had come.  
O then like those, who clench their  
nerves to rush  
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,  
There—closing like an individual  
life—  
In one blind cry of passion and of  
pain.

Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,  
Caught up the whole of love and  
utter'd it,  
And bade adieu for ever.  
Live—yet live—  
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, know-  
ing all  
Life needs for life is possible to  
will—  
Live happy ; tend thy flowers ; be  
tended by  
My blessing ! Should my Shadow  
cross thy thoughts  
Too sadly for their peace, remand it  
thou  
For calmer hours to Memory's darkest  
hold,  
If not to be forgotten—not at once—  
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy  
dreams,  
O might it come like one that looks  
content,  
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the  
truth,  
And point thee forward to a distant  
light,  
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy  
heart  
And leave thee frêer, till thou wake  
refresh'd,  
Then when the first low matin-chirp  
hath grown  
Full quire, and morning driv'n her  
plow of pearl  
Far furrowing into light the mounded  
rack,  
Beyond the fair green field and eastern  
sea.

## THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which  
Leonard wrote :  
It was last summer on a tour in  
Wales :  
Old James was with me : we that day  
had been  
Up Snowdon ; and I wish'd for  
Leonard there,  
And found him in Llanberis : then we  
crost  
Between the lakes, and clamber'd half  
way up

The counter side ; and that same  
song of his  
He told me ; for I banter'd him, and  
swore  
They said he lived shut up within  
himself,  
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous  
days,  
That, setting the *how much* before  
the *how*,  
Cry, like the daughters of the horse-  
leech, " Give,"  
Cram us with all, " but count not me  
the herd !  
To which " They call me what they  
will," he said :  
" But I was born too late : the fair  
new forms,  
That float about the threshold of an  
age,  
Like truths of Science waiting to be  
caught—  
Catch me who can, and make the  
catcher crown'd—  
Are taken by the forelock. Let it  
be.  
But if you care indeed to listen, hear  
These measured words, my work of  
yestermorn.  
" We sleep and wako and sleep,  
but all things move ;  
The Sun flies forward to his brother  
Sun ;  
The dark Earth follows wheel'd in  
her ellipse ;  
And human things returning on them-  
selves  
Move onward, leading up the golden  
year.  
" Ah, tho' the times, when some  
new thought can bud,  
Are but as poets' seasons when they  
flower,  
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the  
shore,  
Have ebb and flow conditioning their  
march,  
And slow and sure comes up the  
golden year.  
" When wealth no more shall rest  
in mounded heaps,  
But smit with frēer light shall slowly  
melt  
In many streams to fatten lower lands,

And light shall spread, and man be  
liker man  
Thro' all the season of the golden year.  
" Shall eagles not be eagles ? wrens  
be wrens ?  
If all the world were falcons, what of  
that ?  
The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
But he not less the eagle. Happy  
days  
Roll onward, leading up the golden  
year.  
" Fly happy happy snails and bear  
the Press ;  
Fly happy with the mission of the  
Cross ;  
Knit land to land, and blowing  
havenward  
With silks, and fruits, and spices,  
clear of toll,  
Enrich the markets of the golden year.  
" But we grow old. Ah ! when  
shall all men's good  
Be each man's rule, and universal  
Peace  
Lie like a shaft of light across the  
land,  
And like a lane of beams athwart the  
sea,  
Thro' all the circle of the golden  
year ? "  
Thus far he flow'd, and ended ;  
whereupon  
" Ah, folly ! " in mimic cadence  
answer'd James—  
" Ah, folly ! for it lies so far away,  
Not in our time, nor in our children's  
time,  
'Tis like the second world to us that  
live ;  
Twere all as one to fix our hopes on  
Heaven  
As on this vision of the golden year."  
With that he struck his staff against  
the rocks  
And broke it,—James,—you know  
him,—old, but full  
Of force and choler, and firm upon  
his feet,  
And like an oaken stock in winter  
woods,  
O'erflourish'd with the hoary clema-  
tis :  
Then added, all in heat :

“ What stuff is this !  
Old writers push'd the happy season  
back,—  
The more fools they,—we forward :  
dreamers both :  
You most, that in an age, when every  
hour  
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the  
death,  
Live on, God love us, as if the seeds-  
man, rapt  
Upon the teeming harvest, should not  
dip  
His hand into the bag : but well I  
know  
That unto him who works, and feels  
he works,  
This same grand year is ever at the  
doors.”  
He spoke : and, high above, I heard  
them blast  
The steep slate-quarry, and the great  
echo flap,  
And buffet round the hills from bluff  
to bluff.

## ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these  
barren crags,  
Match'd with an aged wife, I met  
and dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and  
know not me.  
I cannot rest from travel : I will drink  
Life to the lees : all times I have  
enjoy'd  
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both  
with those  
That loved me, and alone ; on shore,  
and when  
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy  
Hyades  
Vext the dim sea : I am become a  
name :  
For always roaming with a hungry  
heart  
Much have I seen and known ; cities  
of men  
And manners, climates, councils,  
governments,

Myself not least, but honour'd of  
them all ;  
And drunk delight of battle with my  
peers,  
Far on the ringing plains of windy  
Troy.  
I am a part of all that I have met ;  
Yet all experience is an arch where-  
thro'  
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose  
margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move.  
How dull it is to pause, to make an  
end,  
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in  
use !  
As tho' to breathe were life. Life  
piled on life  
Were all too little, and of one to me  
Little remains : but every hour is  
saved  
From that eternal silence, something  
more,  
A bringer of new things ; and vile it  
were  
For some three suns to store and  
hoard myself,  
And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge, like a sinking  
star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human  
thought.  
This is my son, mine own Telem-  
chus,  
To whom I leave the sceptre and the  
isle—  
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
This labour, by slow prudence to  
make mild  
A rugged people, and thro' soft  
degrees  
Subdue them to the useful and the  
good.  
Most blameless is he, centred in the  
sphere  
Of common duties, decent not to fail  
In offices of tenderness, and pay  
Meet adoration to my household  
gods,  
When I am gone. He works his  
work, I mine.  
There lies the port : the vessel puffs  
her sail :  
There gloom the dark broad seas.  
My mariners,

## LOCKSLEY HALL

<p>Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me— That ever with a frolic welcome took The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ; Old age hath yet his honour and his toll ; Death closes all : but something ere the end, Some work of noble note, may yet be done, Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods. The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks : The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the deep Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world. Push off, and sitting well in order smite The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths Of all the western stars, until I die. It may be that the gulfs will wash us down : It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles, And see the great Achilles, whom we knew. Tho' much is takon, much abides ; and tho' We are not now that strength which in old days Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are ; One equal temper of heroic hearts, Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.</p>	<p>'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call, Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall ; Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts, And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts. Many a night from yonder ivied cas- ement, ere I went to rest, Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West. Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thru' the mellow shade, Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid. Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time ; When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed ; When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed : When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see ; Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.— In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast ; In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest ; In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove ; In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love. Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young, And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung. And I said, " My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me, Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."</p>
<p>LOCKSLEY HALL COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn : Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle horn.</p>	

On her pallid cheek and forehead  
came a colour and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in  
the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken  
with a sudden storm of sighs—  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the  
dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, "I have hid my feelings,  
fearing they should do me  
wrong;"

Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?"  
weeping, "I have loved thee  
long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and  
turn'd it in his glowing hands;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran  
itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and  
smote on all the chords with  
might;

Smote the chord of Self, that, tremb-  
ling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did  
we hear the copses ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses  
with the fullness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did  
we watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the  
touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O  
my Amy, mine no more !

O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O  
the barren, barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser  
than all songs have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and ser-  
vile to a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ?—hav-  
ing known me—to decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a  
narrower heart than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to  
his level day by day,  
What is fine within thee growing  
coarse to sympathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou  
art mated with a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will  
have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion  
shall have spent its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a  
little dearer than his horse.

What is this ? his eyes are heavy :  
think not they are glazed with  
wine.

Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him :  
take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his  
brain is over-wrought :  
Soothe him with thy finer fancies,  
touch him with thy lighter  
thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy  
things to understand—  
Better thou wert dead before me, tho'  
I slew thee with my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden  
from the heart's disgrace,  
Roll'd in one another's arms, and  
silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin  
against the strength of youth !  
Cursed be the social lies that warp us  
from the living truth !

Cursed be the sickly forms that err  
from honest Nature's rule !  
Cursed be the gold that gilds the  
straiten'd forehead of the fool !

Well—'tis well that I should bluster !  
—Hadst thou less unworthy  
proved—

Would to God—for I had loved thee  
more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that  
which bears but bitter fruit ?

I will pluck it from my bosom, tho'  
my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to  
such length of years should  
come

As the many-winter'd crow that leads  
the clang ing rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the  
records of the mind?

Can I part her from herself, and  
love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd: sweetly  
did she speak and move:  
Such a one do I remember, whom to  
look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love  
her for the love she bore?  
No—she never loved me truly: love is  
love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils!  
this is truth the poet sings.  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is  
remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it,  
lest thy heart be put to proof,  
In the dead unhappy night, and when  
the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and  
thou art staring at the wall,  
Where the dying night-lamp flickers,  
and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee,  
pointing to his drunken sleep,  
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to  
the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never,"  
whisper'd by the phantom years,  
And a song from out the distance in  
the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking  
ancient kindness on thy pain.  
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow:  
get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace;  
for a tender voice will cry.

'Tis a purer life than thine; a lip to  
drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my  
latest rival brings thee rest.

Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me  
from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father  
with a dearness not his due.  
Half is thine and half is his: it will  
be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted  
to thy petty part,  
With a little hoard of maxims preaching  
down a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the  
feelings—she herself was not  
exempt—  
Truly, she herself had suffer'd"—

Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy!  
wherefore should I care?  
I myself must mix with action, lest I  
wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to,  
lighting upon days like these?  
Every door is barr'd with gold, and  
opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors,  
all the markets overflow.  
I have but an angry fancy: what is  
that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling  
on the foeman's ground,  
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour,  
and the winds are laid with  
sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps  
the hurt that Honour feels,  
And the nations do but murmur,  
snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will  
turn that earlier page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, O  
thou wondrous Mother-Age !

Make me feel the wild pulsation that  
I felt before the strife,  
When I heard my days before me, and  
the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement  
that the coming years would  
yield,  
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he  
leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky high-  
way near and nearer drawn,  
Sees in heaven the light of London  
flaring like a dreary dawn ;

And his spirit leaps within him to be  
gone before him then,  
Underneath the light he looks at, in  
among the throngs of men ;

Men, my brothers, men the workers,  
ever reaping something new :  
That which they have done but earnest  
of the things that they shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human  
eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all  
the wonder that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce,  
argosies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping  
down with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting,  
and there rain'd a ghastly dew  
From the nations' airy navies grap-  
pling in the central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of  
the south-wind rushing warm,  
With the standards of the peoples  
plunging thro' the thunder-  
storm ;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer,  
and the battle-flags were furl'd  
In the Parliament of man, the Feder-  
ation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall  
hold a treiful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber,  
lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd, ere my passion sweep-  
ing thro' me left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and  
left me with the jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all  
things here are out of joint.  
Science moves, but slowly slowly,  
creeping on from point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a  
lion, creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks  
behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one  
increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd  
with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not  
harvest of his youthful joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat  
for ever like a boy's ?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers,  
and I linger on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the  
world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lin-  
gers, and he bears a laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward  
the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me,  
sounding on the bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion  
were a target for their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on  
such a moulder'd string ?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to  
have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness !  
woman's pleasure, woman's  
pain—

Nature made them blinder motions  
bounded in a shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy  
    'passions, match'd with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and  
    as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens,  
    nothing. Ah, for some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where  
    my life began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell  
    my father evil-starr'd ;—  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a  
    selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there  
    to wander far away,  
On from island unto island at the  
    gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow  
    moons and happy skies,  
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in  
    cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats  
    an European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous wood-  
    land, swings the trailer from the  
crag :

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower,  
    hangs the heavy-fruited tree—  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-  
    purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment  
    more than in this march of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in  
    the thoughts that shake man-  
kind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer  
    shall have scope and breathing-  
space ;  
I will rake some savage woman, she  
    shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they  
    shall dive, and they shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and  
    hurl their lances in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and  
    leap the rainbows of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring  
    over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy !  
    but I *know* my words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower  
    than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads,  
    vacant of our glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures,  
    like a beast with lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—what  
    to me were sun or climo ?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the fore-  
    most files of time—

I that rather held it better men should  
    perish one by one,  
Than that earth should stand at gaze  
    like Joshua's moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons.  
    Forward, forward let us range.  
Let the great world spin for ever down  
    the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we  
    sweep into the younger day :  
Better fifty years of Europe than a  
    cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I *knew not*)  
    help me as when life begun :  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters,  
    flash the lightnings, weigh the  
Sun—

O, I see the crescent promise of my  
    spirit hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well  
    thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long  
    farewell to Locksley Hall !  
Now for me the woods may wither,  
    now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin,  
    blackening over heath and holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in  
    its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain  
or hail, or fire or snow;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring  
seaward, and I go.

## GODIVA

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the  
bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires ; and  
there I shaped  
The city's ancient legend into this :—  
Not only we, the latest seed of  
Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a  
wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that  
prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the  
people well,  
And loathed to see them overtax'd ;  
but she  
Did more, and underwent, and over-  
came,  
The woman of a thousand summers  
back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who  
ruled  
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers  
brought  
Their children, clamouring. " If we  
pay, we starve ! "  
She sought her lord, and found him,  
where he strode  
About the hall, among his dogs,  
alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his  
hair  
A yard behind. She told him of their  
tears,  
And pray'd him, " If they pay this  
tax, they starve."  
Whereat he stared, replying, half-  
amazed,  
" You would not let your little finger  
ache  
For such as *these* ? "—" But I would  
die," said she.  
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and  
by Paul :*

Then fillip'd at the diamond in her  
ear ;  
" O ay, ay, ay, you talk ! "—" Alas ! "  
she said,  
" But prove me what it is I would not  
do."  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's  
hand,  
He answer'd, " Ride you naked thro'  
the town,  
And I repeat it ; " and nodding, as in  
scorn,  
He parted, with great strides among  
his dogs.  
So left alone, the passions of her  
mind,  
As winds from all the compass shift  
and blow,  
Made war upon each other for an  
hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald  
forth,  
And bad him cry, with sound of  
trumpet, all  
The hard condition ; but that she  
would loose  
The people : therefore, as they loved  
her well,  
From then till noon no foot should  
pace the street,  
No eye look down, she passing ; but  
that all  
Should keep within, door shut, and  
window barr'd.  
Then fled she to her inmost bower,  
and there  
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her  
belt,  
The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a  
breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer  
moon  
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook  
her head,  
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to  
her knee ;  
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the  
stair  
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sun-  
beam, slid  
From pillar unto pillar, until she  
reach'd  
The gateway ; there she found her  
palfrey trap.

<p>In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.  Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity :  The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.  The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout  Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur  Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot  Light horrors thro' her pulsos : the blind walls  Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead  Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she  Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw  The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field  Gleam thro' the Gothic archways in the wall.  Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity :  And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,  The fatal byword of all years to come,  Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will,  Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,  And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait  On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused ;  And she, that knew not, pass'd : and all at once,  With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon  Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,  One after one : but even then she gain'd  Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,  To meet her lord, she took the tax away,  And built herself an everlasting name.</p>	<p>THE TWO VOICES</p> <p>A still small voice spake unto me,  " Thou art so full of misery,  Were it not better not to be ? "</p> <p>Then to the still small voice I said ;  " Let me not cast in endless shade  What is so wonderfully made."</p> <p>To which the voice did urge reply ;  " To-day I saw the dragon-fly  Come from the wells where he did lie.</p> <p>" An inner impulse rent the veil  Of his old husk ; from head to tail  Came out clear plates of sapphore mail.</p> <p>" He dried his wings : like gauze they grew  Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  A living flash of light he flew."</p> <p>I said, " When first the world began,  Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,  And in the sixth she moulded man.</p> <p>" She gave him mind, the lordliest  Proportion, and, above the rest,  Dominion in the head and breast."</p> <p>Thereto the silent voice replied :  " Self-blinded are you by your pride :  Look up thro' night : the world is wide.</p> <p>" This truth within thy mind rehearse,  That in a boundless universe  Is boundless better, boundless worse.</p> <p>" Think you this mould of hopes and fears  Could find no statelier than his peers  In yonder hundred million spheres ? "</p> <p>It spake, moreover, in my mind :  " Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,  Yet is there plenty of the kind."</p> <p>Then did my response clearer fall :  " No compound of this earthly ball  Is like another, all in all."</p>
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To which ne answer'd scoffingly ;  
 " Good soul I suppose I grant it thee,  
 Who'll weep for thy deficiency ? "

" Or will one beam be less intense,  
 When thy peculiar difference  
 Is cancell'd in the world of sense ? "

I would have said, " Thou canst not  
 know,"  
 But my full heart, that work'd be-  
 low,  
 Rau'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :  
 " Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
 Surely 'twere better not to be.

" Thine anguish will not let theesleep,  
 Nor any train of reason keep :  
 Thou canst not think, but thou wilt  
 weep."

I said, " The years with change  
 advance :  
 If I make dark my countenance,  
 I shut my life from happier chance.

" Some turn this sickness yet might  
 take,  
 Ev'n yet." But he : " What drug  
 can make  
 A wither'd palsy cease to shake ? "

I wept, " Tho' I should die, I know  
 That all about the thorn will blow  
 In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

" And men, thro' novel spheres of  
 thought  
 Still moving after truth long sought,  
 Will learn new things when I am  
 not."

" Yet," said the secret voice, " some  
 time,  
 Sooner or later, will gray prime  
 Make thy grass hoar with early rime

" Not less swift souls that yearn for  
 light,  
 Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
 Would sweep the tracts of day and  
 night.

" Not less the bee would range her  
 cells,  
 The furzy prickle fire the dells,  
 The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that " all the years invent ;  
 Each month is various to present  
 The world with some development.

" Were this not well, to bide mine  
 hour,  
 Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower  
 How grows the day of human power ? "

" The highest-mounted mind," he  
 said,  
 " Still sees the sacred morning spread  
 The silent summit overhead.

" Will thirty seasons render plain  
 Those lonely lights that still remain,  
 Just breaking over land and main ?

" Or make that morn, from his cold  
 crown  
 And crystal silence creeping down,  
 Flood with full daylight glebe and  
 town ?

" Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let  
 Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
 In midst of knowledge, dream'd not  
 yet.

" Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
 Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
 Because the scale is infinite.

" 'Twere better not to breathe or  
 speak,  
 Than cry for strength, remaining  
 weak,  
 And seem to find, but still to seek.

" Moreover, but to seem to find  
 Asks what thou lackest, thought  
 resign'd,  
 A healthy frame, a quiet mind."

I said, " When I am gone away,  
 ' He dared not tarry,' men will say,  
 Doing dishonour to my clay."

" This is more vile," he made reply,  
 " To breathe and loathe, to live and  
 sigh,  
 Than once from dread of pain to die.

" Sick art thou—a divided will  
 Still heaping on the fear of ill  
 The fear of men, a coward still.

" Do men love thee? Art thou so  
 bound  
 To men, that how thy name may  
 sound  
 Will vex thee lying underground?

" The memory of the wither'd leaf  
 In endless time is scarce more brief  
 Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

" Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;  
 The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,  
 Hears little of the false or just."

" Hard task, to pluck resolve," I  
 cried,  
 " From emptiness and the waste wide  
 Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

" Nay—rather yet that I could raise  
 One hope that warm'd me in the days  
 While still I yearn'd for human praise.

" When, wide in soul and bold of  
 tongue,  
 Among the tents I paused and sung,  
 The distant battle flash'd and rung.  
 " I sung the joyful Pean clear,  
 And, sitting, burnish'd without fear  
 The brand, the buckler, and the  
 spear—

" Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
 To war with falsehood to the knife,  
 And not to lose the good of life—

" Some hidden principle to move,  
 To put together, part and prove,  
 And mete the bounds of hate and  
 love—

" As far as might be, to carve out  
 Free space for every human doubt,  
 That the whole mind might orb  
 about—

" To search thro' all I felt or saw,  
 The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
 And reach the law within the law:

" At least, not rotting like a weed,  
 But, having sown some generous  
 seed,  
 Fruitful of further thought and deed,

" To pass, when Life her light withdraws,  
 Not void of righteous self-applause,  
 Nor in a merely selfish cause—

" In some good cause, not in mine  
 own,  
 To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,  
 And like a warrior overthrown;

" Whose eyes are dim with glorious  
 tears,  
 When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears  
 His country's war-song thrill his ears:

" Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
 What time the foeman's line is broke,  
 And all the war is roll'd in smoke."

" Yea!" said the voice, " thy dream  
 was good,  
 While thou abodest in the bud.  
 It was the stirring of the blood.

" If Nature put not forth her power  
 About the opening of the flower,  
 Who is it that could live an hour?

" Then comes the check, the change,  
 the fall.  
 Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
 There is one remedy for all.

" Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,  
 Link'd month to month with such a  
 chain  
 Of knitted purport, all were vain.

" Thou hadst not between death and  
 birth  
 Dissolved the riddle of the earth.  
 So were thy labour little-worth.

“ That men with knowledge mercly play'd,  
I told thee—hardly nigher made,  
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade ;

“ Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,  
Named man, may hope some truth to find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

“ For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

“ Cry, faint not : either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

“ Cry, faint not, climb : the summits slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

“ Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

“ I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

“ If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

“ And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

“ Than angels. Cease to wail and bawl !  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?  
There is one remedy for all.”

“ O dull, one-sided voice,” said I,  
“ Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die ?

“ I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

“ I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

“ Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream ;

“ But heard, by secret transport led,  
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head—

“ Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

“ He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorned, and bruised with stones :

“ But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face.”

The sullen answer slid betwixt :  
“ Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,  
The elements were kindlier mix'd.”

I said, “ I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

“ And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new :

“ Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :

“ For I go, weak from suffering here ;  
Naked I go, and void of cheer :  
What is it that I may not fear ? ”

“ Consider well,” the voice replied,  
“ His face, that two hours since hath died ;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ? ”

" Will he obey when one commands ?  
Or answer should one press his hands?  
He answers not, nor understands.

" His palms are folded on his breast :  
There is no other thing express'd  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

" His lips are very mild and meek :  
Tho' one should smite him on the  
cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

" His little daughter, whose sweet  
face  
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonour to her race—

" His sons grow up that bear his  
name,  
Some grow to honour, some to  
shame,—  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

" He will not hear the north-wind  
rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter  
crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave.

" High up the vapours fold and swim :  
About him broods the twilight dim :  
The place he knew forgetteth him."

" If all be dark, vague voice," I said,  
" These things are wrapt in doubt and  
dread.  
Nor canst thou show the dead are  
dead.

" The sap dries up : the plant declines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not Death ? the outward  
signs ?

" I found him when my years were  
few ;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.

" From grave to grave the shadow  
crept :  
In her still place the morning wept :  
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

" The simple senses crown'd his head:  
' Omega ! thou art Lord,' they said,  
' We find no motion in the dead.'

" Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by  
these,  
Not make him sure that he shall  
cease ?

" Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the  
sense ?

" He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.

" Here sits he shaping wings to fly :  
His heart forebodes a mystery :  
He names the name Eternity.

" That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find,  
He sows himself on every wind.

" He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And thro' thick veils to apprehend  
A labour working to an end.

" The end and the beginning vex  
His reason : many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counter-  
checks.

" He knows a baseness in his blood  
At such strange war with something  
good,  
He may not do the thing he would.

" Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and with-  
drawn.

" Ah ! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt.

" But thou canst answer not again.  
With thine own weapon art thou  
slain,  
Or thou will answer but in vain.

" The doubt would rest, I dare not  
    solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve."

As when a billow, blown against,  
    Falls back, the voice with which I  
    fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced.

" Where wert thou when thy father  
    play'd  
In his free field, and pastime made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

" A merry boy they called him then.  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again.

" Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man :

" Who took a wife, who rear'd his  
    race,  
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his  
    days :

" A life of nothings, nothing-worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth ! "

" These words," I said, " are like the  
    rest,  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast :

" But if I grant, thou might'st defend  
The thesis which thy words intend—  
That to begin implies to end ;

" Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould ?

" I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, how'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

" It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

" As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping thro' from state to state.

" As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again.

" So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and  
    touch.

" But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;

" Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of  
    night.

" Or if thro' lower lives I came—  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame—

" I might forget my weaker lot;  
For is not our first year forgot ?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

" And men, whose reason long was  
    blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

" Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory :

" For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own material prime ?

" Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

" Of something felt, like something  
    here ;  
Of something done, I know not  
    where ;  
Such as no language may declare."

The still voice laugh'd. "I talk,"  
said he,  
"Not with thy dreams. Suffice it  
thee  
Thy pain is a reality."

"But thou," said I, "hast miss'd  
thy mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal  
ark,  
By making all the horizon dark.

"Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might  
ensue  
With this old soul in organs new?

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human  
breath  
Has ever truly long'd for death.

"Tis life, whereof our nerves are  
scant.  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;  
More life, and fuller, that I want."

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
"Behold, it is the Sabbath morn."

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,  
When mornes begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest:  
Passing the place where each must  
rest,  
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,  
With measur'd footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walk'd demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on:  
I spoke, but answer came there none:  
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, "Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighbourhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
"I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
"I may not speak of what I know."

Like an *Aeolian* harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes:

Such seem'd the whisper at my side:  
"What is it thou knowest, sweet  
voice?" I cried.  
"A hidden hope," the voice replied:

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the  
shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature's living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers:  
You scarce could see the grass for  
flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along:  
The woods were fill'd so full with  
song,  
There seem'd no room for sense of  
wrong.

So variously seem'd all things wrought,  
I marvell'd how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, "Rejoice! rejoice!"

### THE DAY-DREAM PROLOGUE

O, LADY FLORA, let me speak:  
A pleasant hour has past away  
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,

The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
As by the lattice you reclined,  
I went thro' many wayward moods  
To see you dreaming—and, behind,  
A summer crisp with shining woods.  
And I too dream'd, until at last  
Across my fancy, brooding warm,  
The reflex of a legend past,  
And loosely settled into form.  
And would you have the thought I had,

And see the vision that I saw,  
Then take the broidery-frame, and add

A crimson to the quaint Macaw,  
And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
Nor look with that too-earnest eye—

The rhymes are dazzled from their place,  
And order'd words asunder fly.

### THE SLEEPING PALACE

1

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;

Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
Here stays the blood along the veins.

Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,  
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
Like hints and echoes of the world  
To spirits folded in the womb.

II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
On every slanting terrace-lawn.  
The fountain to his place returns  
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
Here drops the banner on the tower,  
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
The peacock in his laurel bower,  
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs:  
In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
The mantles from the golden pegs  
Droop sleepily: no sound is made,  
Not even of a gnat that sings.  
More like a picture seemeth all  
Than those old portraits of old kings,  
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drain'd;  
and there  
The wrinkled steward at his task,  
The maid-of-honour blooming fair:  
The page has caught her hand in his:  
Her lips are sever'd as to speak:  
His own are pouted to a kiss:  
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,  
Make prisms in every carven glass,  
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.  
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
His state the king reposing keeps.  
He must have been a jovial king.

VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
At distance like a little wood ;  
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
And grapes with bunches red as blood ;  
All creeping plants, a wall of green  
Close-matted, bur and brake and brier,  
And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
High up, the topmost palace-spire.

III

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard  
In palace chambers far apart.  
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
That lie upon her charmed heart.  
She sleeps : on either hand upswells  
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :  
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
A perfect form in perfect rest.

## VII

When will the hundred summers die,  
And thought and time be born again,  
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?  
Here all things in their place remain,  
As all were order'd, ages since.  
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

## I

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purpled coverlet,  
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,  
On either side her tranced form  
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :  
The stumbrous light is rich and warm,  
And moves not on the rounded curl.

## II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
Langidly ever ; and, amid  
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,  
Glowes forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
With bracelets of the diamond bright :  
Her constant beauty doth inform  
Stillness with love, and day with light.

## THE ARRIVAL

## I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
To those that seek them issue forth ;  
For love in sequel works with fate,  
And draws the veil from hidden worth.  
He travels far from other skies—  
His mantle glitters on the rocks—  
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
And lighter-footed than the fox.

## II

The bodies and the bones of those  
That strove in other days to pass,  
Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
He gazes on the silent dead :  
" They perish'd in their daring deeds."  
This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
" The many fail : the one succeeds."

## III

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :  
He breaks the hedge : he enters there :  
The colour flies into his cheeks :  
He trusts to light on something fair ;  
For all his life the charm did talk  
About his path, and hover near  
With words of promise in his walk,  
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

## IV

More close and close his footsteps  
wind ;  
The Magic Music in his heart  
Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
The quiet chamber far apart.  
His spirit flutters like a lark,  
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.  
"Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
How dark those hidden eyes must  
be ! "

## THE REVIVAL

## I

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.  
There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
And feet that ran, and doors that  
clapt,  
And barking dogs, and crowing  
cocks ;  
A fuller light illumined all,  
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

## II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
The butler drank, the steward  
scawl'd,  
The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
The parrot scream'd, the peacock  
squall'd,  
The maid and page renew'd their  
strife,  
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and  
clackt,  
And all the long-pont stream of life  
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III

And last with these the king awoke,  
And in his chair himself uprear'd,  
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and  
spoke,  
"By holy rood, a royal beard !  
How say you ? we have slept, my  
lords.  
My beard has grown into my  
lap."  
The barons swore, with many words,  
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

## IV

"Pardy," return'd the king, "but  
still  
My joints are something stiff or so.  
My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
I mention'd half an hour ago ? "  
The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
In courteous words return'd reply :  
But dallied with his golden chain,  
And, smiling, put the question by.

## THE DEPARTURE

## I

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
And round her waist she felt it fold,  
And far across the hills they went  
In that new world which is the old :  
Across the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
And deep into the dying day  
The happy princess follow'd him.

## II

"I'd sleep another hundred years,  
O love, for such another kiss ; "  
"O wake for ever, love," she hears,  
"O love, 'twas such as this and  
this."  
And o'er them many a sliding star,  
And many a merry wind was borne,  
And, stream'd thro' many a golden  
bar,  
The twilight melted into morn.

## III

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep ! "  
"O happy sleep, that lightly fled ! "  
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep ! "  
"O love, thy kiss would wake the  
dead ! "  
And o'er them many a flowing range  
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-  
bark,  
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dark.

## IV

"A hundred summers ! can it be ?  
And whither goest thou, tell me  
where ?"  
"O seek my father's court with me,  
For there are greater wonders  
there."  
And o'er the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Thro' all the world she follow'd  
him.

## MORAL

## I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And if you find no moral there,  
Go, look in any glass and say,  
What moral is in being fair.  
Oh, to what uses shall we put  
The wildwood-flower that simply  
blows ?  
And is there any moral shut  
Within the bosom of the rose ?

## II

But any man that walks the mead,  
In bud or blade, or bloom, may  
find,  
According as his humours lead,  
A meaning suited to his mind.  
And liberal applications lie  
In Art like Nature, dearest friend ;  
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOI

## I

You shake your head. A random  
string  
Your finer female sense offends.  
Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
To fall asleep with all one's friends ;  
To pass with all our social ties  
To silence from the paths of men ;  
And every hundred years to rise  
And learn the world, and sleep  
again ;

To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
And wake on science grown to more,  
On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
As wild as aught of fairy lore ;  
And all that else the years will show,  
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
The vast Republics that may grow,  
The Federations and the Powers ;  
Titanic forces taking birth  
In divers seasons, divers climes ;  
For we are Ancients of the earth,  
And in the morning of the times.

## II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
Thro' sunny decades new and  
strange,  
Or gay quinquennials would we reap  
The flower and quintessence of  
change.

## III

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !  
So much your eyes my fancy take—  
Be still the first to leap to light  
That I might kiss those eyes awake !  
For, am I right or am I wrong,  
To choose your own you did not  
care ;  
You'd have my moral from the song,  
And I will take my pleasure there :  
And, am I right or am I wrong,  
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',  
To search a meaning for the song,  
Perforce will still revert to you ;  
Nor finds a closer truth than this  
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,  
And evermore a costly kiss  
The prelude to some brighter world.

## IV

For since the time when Adam first  
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
And every bird of Eden burst  
In carol, every bud to flower,  
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd  
hopes ?  
What lips, like thine, so sweetly  
join'd ?  
What, on the double rosebud droops  
The fullness of the pensive mind ?

Which all too dearly self-involved,  
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;  
A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
That lets thee neither hear nor see :  
But break it. In the name of wife,  
And in the rights that name may  
give,  
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And, if you find a meaning there,  
O whisper to your glass, and say,  
" What wonder, if he thinks me  
fair ? "  
What wonder I was all unwise,  
To shape the song for your delight  
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise,  
That float thro' Heaven, and can-  
not light ?  
Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
And either sacred unto you.

## AMPHION

My father left a park to me,  
But it is wild and barren,  
A garden too with scarce a tree  
And waster than a warren :  
Yet say the neighbours when they call  
It is not bad but good land,  
And in it is the germ of all  
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great  
In days of old Amphion,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
Nor cared for seed or scion !  
And had I lived when song was great,  
And legs of trees were limber,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,  
Such happy intonation,  
Wherever he sat down and sung  
He left a small plantation ;

Wherever in a lonely grove  
He set up his forlorn pipes,  
The gouty oak began to move,  
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain sturr'd its bushy crown,  
And, as tradition teaches,  
Young ashes pirouett'd down  
Coqueting with young beeches ;  
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
Ran forward to his rhyming,  
And from the valleys underneath  
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
The woodbine wreaths that bind  
her,  
And down the middle buzz ! she went  
With all her bees behind her :  
The poplars, in long order due,  
With cypress promenaded,  
The shock-head willows two and two  
By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shot alder from the wave,  
Came yews, a dismal coterie ;  
Each pluck'd his one foot from the  
grave,

Poussetting with a sloe-tree :  
Old elms came breaking from the  
vinc,  
The vine stream'd out to follow,  
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,  
When, ere his song was ended,  
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
The country-side descended ;  
And shepherds from the mountain-  
caves

Look'd down, half-pleased, half-  
frighten'd,  
As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,  
And wanton without measure ;  
So youthful and so flexible then,  
You moved her at your pleasure,  
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the  
twigs !

And make her dance attendance ;  
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set springs  
And scirrrous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age  
 I could not move a thistle ;  
 The very sparrows in the hedge  
 Scarce answer to my whistle ;  
 Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
 With strumming and with scraping,  
 A jackass hechaws from the rick,  
 The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound  
 Like sleepy counsel pleading :  
 O Lord ! 'tis in my neighbour's  
 ground,  
 The modern Muses reading.  
 They read Botanic Treatises,  
 And Works on Gardening thro'  
 there,  
 And Methods of transplanting trees,  
 To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose  
 O'er books of travell'd scamen,  
 And show you slips of all that grows  
 From England to Van Diemen.  
 They read in arbours clipt and cut,  
 And alleys, faded places,  
 By squares of tropic summer shut  
 And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
 Are neither green nor sappy ;  
 Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
 The spindlings look unhappy.  
 Better to me the meanest weed  
 That blows upon its mountain,  
 The vilest herb that runs to seed  
 Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,  
 And years of cultivation,  
 Upon my proper patch of soil  
 To grow my own plantation.  
 I'll take the showers as they fall,  
 I will not vex my bosom :  
 Enough if at the end of all  
 A little garden blossom.

#### ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
 Are sparkling to the moon :  
 My breath to heaven like vapour  
 goes :  
 May my soul follow soon !

The shadows of the convent-towers  
 Slant down the snowy sward,  
 Still creeping with the creeping hours  
 That lead me to my Lord :  
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
 As are the frosty skies,  
 Or this first snowdrop of the year  
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and  
 dark,  
 To yonder shining ground ;  
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
 To yonder argent round ;  
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
 My spirit before Thee ;  
 So in mine earthly house I am,  
 To that I hope to be,  
 Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and  
 far,  
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;  
 The flashes come and go ;  
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
 And strews her lights below,  
 And deepens on and up ! the gates  
 Roll back, and far within  
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom  
 waits,  
 To make me pure of sin.  
 The sabbaths of Eternity,  
 One sabbath deep and wide—  
 A light upon the shining sea—  
 The Bridegroom with his bride !

#### SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of  
 men,  
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
 My strength is as the strength of ten,  
 Because my heart is pure.  
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and  
 fly,  
 The horse and rider reel :

They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
And when the tide of combat  
stands,

Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
That lightly rain from ladies'  
hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
On whom their favours fall !  
For them I battle till the end,  
To save from shame and thrall :  
But all my heart is drawn above,  
My knees are bow'd in crypt and  
shrine :

I never felt the kiss of love,  
Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
Me mightier transports move and  
thrill ;  
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
A light before me swims,  
Between dark stems the forest glows,  
I hear a noise of hymns :  
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;  
I hear a voice, but none are there :  
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
The tapers burning fair,  
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
And solemn chaunts resound be-  
tween.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
I find a magic bark ;  
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :  
I float till all is dark.  
A gentle sound, an awful light !  
Three angels bear the holy Grail :  
With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail.  
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !  
My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
As down dark tides the glory slides,  
And star-like mingles with the  
stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
Thro' dreaming towns I go,  
The cock crows ere the Christmas  
morn,  
The streets are dumb with snow.

The tempest crackles on the leads,  
And, ringing, spins from brand and  
mail ;  
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
And gilds the driving hail.  
I leave the plain, I climb the height :  
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear ;  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here.  
I muse on joy that will not cease,  
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
Whose odours haunt my dreams ;  
And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
This mortal armour that I wear,  
This weight and size, this heart and  
eyes,  
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest  
air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And thro' the mountain-walls  
A rolling organ-harmony  
Swells up, and shakes and falls.  
Then move the trees, the cypresses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear :  
" O just and faithful knight of God !  
Ride on ! the prize is near."  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;  
By bridge and ford, by park and  
pale,  
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder  
town  
Met me walking on yonder way,  
" And have you lost your heart ? "  
she said ;  
" And are you married yet, Edward  
Gray ? "

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
" Sweet Emma Moreland, love no  
more  
Can touch the heart of Edward  
Gray.

"Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's  
will;  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

"Shy she was, and I thought her cold :  
Thought her proud, and fled over  
the sea ;  
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for  
me.

"Cruel, cruel the words I said !  
Cruelly came they back to-day :  
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,  
'To trouble the heart of Edward  
Gray.'

"There I put my face in the grass—  
Whisper'd 'Listen to my despair :  
I repent me of all I did :  
Speak a little, Ellen Adair !'

"Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;  
And here the heart of Edward  
Gray !'

"Love may come, and love may go,  
And fly, like a bird, from tree to  
tree :  
But I will love no more, no more,  
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

"Bitterly wept I over the stone :  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
There lies the body of Ellen Adair !  
And there the heart of Edward  
Gray !"

### WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUM head-waiter at The Cock,  
To which I most resort,  
How goes the time ? 'Tis five  
o'clock.  
Go fetch a pint of port :

But let it not be such as that  
You set before chance-comers,  
But such whose father-grape grew fat  
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
But may she still be kind,  
And whisper lovely words, and use  
Her influence on the mind,  
To make me write my random  
rhymes,  
Ere they be half-forgotten :  
Nor add and alter, many times,  
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
Her laurel in the wine,  
And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
These favour'd lips of mine ;  
Until the charm have power to make  
New lifeblood warm the bosom,  
And barren commonplaces break  
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;  
Her gradual singers steal  
And touch upon the master-chord  
Of all I feel and feel.  
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
And phantom hopes assemble ;  
And that child's heart within the  
man's  
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns  
By many pleasant ways,  
Against its fountain upward runs  
The current of my days :  
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;  
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;  
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,  
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,  
Unboding critic-pen,  
Or that external want of pence,  
Which vexes public men,  
Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
For that which all deny them—  
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake  
Tho' fortune clip my wings,

I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
Half-views of men and things.  
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;  
There must be stormy weather ;  
But for some true result of good  
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;  
If old things, there are new ;  
Ten thousand broken lights and  
shapes,

Yet glimpses of the true.

Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
As on this whirligig of Time  
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid ;  
With fair horizons bound :  
This whole wide earth of light and  
shade

Comes out, a perfect round.  
High over roaring Temple-bar,  
And, set in Heaven's third story,  
I look at all things as they are,  
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest  
Half-mused, or reeling-ripe,  
The pint, you brought me, was the  
best

That ever came from pipe.  
But tho' the port surpasses praise,  
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
Is there some magic in the place ?  
Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,  
No pint of white or red  
Had ever half the power to turn  
This wheel within my head,  
Which bears a season'd brain about,  
Unsubject to confusion,  
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and  
out,  
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
With many kinsmen gay,  
Where long and largely we carouse  
As who shall say me nay :  
Each month, a birth-day coming on,  
We drink defying trouble,  
Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
Had relish fiery-new,  
Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,  
As old as Waterloo ;  
Or stow'd (when classic Canning died)  
In musty bins and chambers,  
Had cast upon its crusty side  
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !  
She answer'd to my call,  
She changes with that mood or this,  
Is all-in-all to all :  
She lit the spark within my throat  
To make my blood run quicker,  
Used all her fiery will, and smote  
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
The waiter's hands, that reach  
To each his perfect pint of stout,  
His proper chop to each.  
He looks not like the common breed  
That with the napkin dally ;  
I think he came like Ganymede,  
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg  
Than modern poultry drop,  
Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
And cram'd a plumper crop ;  
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
Crow'd lustier late and early,  
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,  
Till in a court he saw  
A something-pottle-bodied boy,  
That knuckled at the taw :  
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and  
good,  
Flew over roof and casement :  
His brothers of the weather stood  
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and  
spire,  
And follow'd with acclaims,  
A sign to many a staring shire,  
Came crowing over Thames.

Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
Till, where the street grows straiter,  
One fix'd for ever at the door,  
And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?  
How out of place she makes  
The violet of a legend blow  
Among the chops and steaks !  
'Tis but a steward of the can,  
One shade more plump than common ;  
As just and mere a serving-man  
As any, born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down  
Into the common day ?  
Is it the weight of that half-crown,  
Which I shall have to pay ?  
For, something duller than at first,  
Nor wholly comfortable,  
I sit (my empty glass reversed),  
And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife  
I take myself to task ;  
Lest of the fullness of my life  
I leave an empty flask :  
For I had hope, by something rare,  
To prove myself a poet ;  
But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,  
Till they be gather'd up ;  
The truth, that fits the flowing can,  
Will haunt the vacant cup :  
And others' follies teach us not,  
Not much their wisdom teaches ;  
And most, of sterling worth, is what  
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !  
We know not what we know.  
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone,  
'Tis gone, and let it go.  
'Tis gone : a thousand such have slept  
Away from my embraces,  
And fall'n into the dusty crypt  
Of darkon'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went  
Long since, and came no more ;  
With peals of genial clamour sent  
From many a tavern-door,  
With twisted quirks and happy hits,  
From misty men of letters ;  
The tavern-hours of mighty wits—  
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks  
Had yet their native glow :  
Nor yet the fear of little books  
Had made him talk for show ;  
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
He flash'd his random speeches ;  
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd  
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,  
Like all good things on earth !  
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,  
At half thy real worth ?  
I hold it good, good things should pass :  
With time I will not quarrel :  
It is but yonder empty glass  
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
To which I most resort,  
I too must part : I hold thee dear  
For this good pint of port.  
For this, thou shalt from all things suck

Marrow of mirth and laughter ;  
And, wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou will never move from hence,  
The sphere thy fate allots :  
Thy latter days increased with pence  
Go down among the pots :  
Thou batteneast by the greasy gleam  
In haunts of hungry sinners,  
Old boxes, larded with the steam  
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,  
Would quarrel with our lot ;

Thy care is, under polish'd tins,  
To serve the hot-and-hot;  
To come and go, and come again,  
Returning like the pewit,  
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
The thick-set hazel dies;  
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread  
The corners of thine eyes:  
Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
Our changeable equinoxes,  
Till mellow Death, like some late  
guest,  
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt  
cease  
To pace the gritted floor,  
And, laying down an unctuous lease  
Of life, shalt earn no more;  
No carved cross-bones, the types of  
Death,  
Shall show thee past to Heaven:  
But carved cross-pipes, and, under-  
neath,  
A pint-pot, neatly graven.

TO —,  
AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

“Cursed be he that moves my bones.”  
*Shakespeare's Epitaph.*

You might have won the Poet's name,  
If such be worth the winning now,  
And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
A life that moves to gracious ends  
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have miss'd the irreverent  
doom  
Of those that wear the Poet's crown:  
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die  
Nor leave his music as of old,  
But round him ere he scarce be cold  
Begins the scandal and the cry:

“Proclaim the faults he would not  
show:  
Break lock and seal: betray the  
trust:  
Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just  
The many-headed beast should  
know.”

Ah shameless! for he did but sing  
A song that pleased us from its  
worth;  
No public life was his on earth,  
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:  
His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
My Shakespeare's curse on clown  
and knave  
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
The little life of bank and brier,  
The bird that pipes his lone desire  
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud  
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
For whom the carrion vulture waits  
To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN  
GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
The long divine Pencian pass,  
The vast Akrokerauian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
With such a pencil, such a pen,  
You shadow forth to distant men,  
I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
And track'd you still on classic  
ground,  
I grew in gladness till I found  
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
And glisten'd—here and there  
alone  
The broad-limb'd Gods at random  
thrown

By fountain-urns ;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
Of cavern pillars ; on the swell  
The silver lily heaved and fell ;  
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea  
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks,  
To him who sat upon the rocks,  
And flute'd to the morning sea.

#### LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,  
And clouds are highest up in air,  
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn :  
Lovers long-betroth'd were they :  
They two will wed the morrow morn ;  
God's blessing on the day !

" He does not love me for my birth,  
Nor for my lands so broad and fair ;  
He loves me for my own true worth,  
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
Said, " Who was this that went  
from thee ? "

" It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,  
" To-morrow he weds with me."

" O God be thank'd ! " said Alice the  
nurse,  
" That all comes round so just and  
fair :

Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
And you are not the Lady Clare."

" Are ye out of your mind, my nurse,  
my nurse ? "

Said Lady Clare, " that ye speak  
so wild ? "

" As God's above," said Alice the  
nurse,  
" I speak the truth : you are my  
child.

" The old Earl's daughter died at my  
breast ;  
I speak the truth, as I live by bread !  
I buried her like my own sweet child,  
And put my child in her stead."

" Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
O mother," she said, " if this be  
true,  
To keep the best man under the sun  
So many years from his due."

" Nay now, my child," said Alice the  
nurse,  
" But keep the secret for your life,  
And all you have will be Lord  
Ronald's  
When you are man and wife."

" If I'm a beggar born," she said,  
" I will speak out, for I dare not lie,  
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,  
And sling the diamond necklace by."

" Nay now, my child," said Alice the  
nurse,  
" But keep the secret all ye can."  
She said " Not so : but I will know  
If there be any faith in man."

" Nay now, what faith ? " said Alice  
the nurse,  
" The man will cleave unto his  
right."  
" And he shall have it," the lady  
replied,  
" Tho' I should die to-night."

" Yet give one kiss to your mother  
dear !  
Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee."  
" O mother, mother, mother," she  
said,  
" So strange it seems to me.

" Yet here's a kiss for my mother  
dear,  
My mother dear, if this be so,  
And lay your hand upon my head,  
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
 She was no longer Lady Clare :  
 She went by dale, and she went by  
 down,  
 With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had  
 brought  
 Leapt up from where she lay,  
 Drot her head in the maiden's hand,  
 And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his  
 tower :  
 " O Lady Clare, you shame your  
 worth !

Why come you drest like a village  
 maid,  
 That are the flower of the earth ? "

" If I come drest like a village maid,  
 I am but as my fortunes are :  
 I am a beggar born," she said,  
 " And not the Lady Clare."

" Play me no tricks," said Lord  
 Ronald,  
 " For I am yours in word and in  
 deed.

Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,  
 " Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up !  
 Her heart within her did not fail :  
 She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,  
 And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn :  
 He turn'd, and kiss'd her where she  
 stood :  
 " If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I," said he, " the next in  
 blood—

" If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I," said he, " the lawful heir,  
 We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
 And you shall still be Lady Clare."

She replies, in accents fainter,  
 " There is none I love like thee."  
 He is but a landscape-painter,  
 And a village maiden she.  
 He to lips, that fondly falter,  
 Presses his without reproof :  
 Leads her to the village altar,  
 And they leave her father's roof.  
 " I can make no marriage present ;  
 Little can I give my wife,  
 Love will make our cottage pleasant,  
 And I love thee more than life."  
 They by parks and lodges going  
 See the lordly castles stand :  
 Summer woods, about them blow-  
 ing,  
 Made a murmur in the land.  
 From deep thought himself he rouses,  
 Says to her that loves him well,  
 " Let us see these handsome houses  
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell."  
 So she goes by him attended,  
 Hears him lovingly converse,  
 Sees whatever fair and splendid  
 Lay betwixt his home and hers :  
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
 Parks and order'd gardens great,  
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
 But for pleasure and for state.  
 All he shows her makes him dearer :  
 Evermore she seems to gaze  
 On that cottage growing nearer,  
 Where they twain will spend their  
 days.

O but she will love him truly !  
 He shall have a cheerful home ;  
 She will order all things duly,  
 When bencath his roof they come.  
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
 Till a gateway she discerns  
 With armorial bearings stately,  
 And beneath the gate she turns ;  
 Sees a mansion more majestic  
 Than all those she saw before :  
 Many a gallant gay domestic  
 Bows before him at the door.  
 And they speak in gentle murmur,  
 When they answer to his call,  
 While he treads with footstep firmer,  
 Leading on from hall to hall.  
 And, while now she wonders blindly,  
 Nor the meaning can divine,  
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
 " All of this is mine and thine."

## THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

IN her ear he whispers gaily,  
 " If my heart by signs can tell,  
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,  
 And I think thou lov'st me well."

Here he lives in state and bountiful,  
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,  
Not a lord in all the country  
Is so great a lord as he.  
All at once the colour flushes  
Her sweet face from brow to chin :  
As it were with shame she blushes,  
And her spirit changed within.  
Then her countenance all over  
Pale again as death did prove :  
But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
And he cheer'd her soul with love.  
So she strove against her weakness,  
Tho' at times her spirits sank :  
Shaped her heart with woman's meek-  
ness  
To all duties of her rank :  
And a gentle consort made he,  
And her gentle mind was such  
That she grew a noble lady,  
And the people loved her much.  
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
With the burthen of an honour  
Unto which she was not born.  
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
As she murmur'd, " Oh that he  
Were once more that landscape-  
painter,  
Which did win my heart from me ! "  
So she droop'd and droop'd before him,  
Fading slowly from his side :  
Three fair children first she bore him,  
Then before her time she died.  
Weeping, weeping late and early,  
Walking up and pacing down,  
Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,  
Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.  
And he came to look upon her,  
And he look'd at her and said,  
" Bring the dress and put it on her,  
That she wore when she was wed."  
Then her people, softly treading,  
Bore to earth her body, drest  
In the dress that she was wed in,  
That her spirit might have rest.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN  
GUINEVERE  
A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
With tears and smiles from heaven  
again

The maiden Spring upon the plain  
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.  
In crystal vapour everywhere  
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,  
And, far in forest-deeps unseen,  
The topmost elmtree gather'd green  
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :  
Sometimes the throstle whistled  
strong :  
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd  
along,  
Hush'd all the groves from fear of  
wrong :  
By grassy capes with fuller sound  
In curves the yellowing river ran,  
And drooping chestnut-buds began  
To spread into the perfect fan,  
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,  
With blissful treble ringing clear.  
She seem'd a part of joyous  
Spring :  
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
Buckled with golden clasps before :  
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
Now by some tinkling rivulet,  
In mosses mixt with violet  
Her cream-white mule his pastern set :  
And fleeter now she skimm'd the  
plains  
Than she whose elfin prancer springs  
By night to eery warblings,  
When all the glimmering moorland  
rings  
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,  
The happy winds upon her play'd,  
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :  
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd  
The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
A man had given all other bliss,  
And all his worldly worth for this,  
To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
Upon her perfect lips.

## A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
Thy tribute wave deliver :  
No more by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
A rivulet then a river :  
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,  
And here thine aspen shiver ;  
And here by thee will hum the bee,  
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
A thousand moons will quiver ;  
But not by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

## THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid ;  
She was more fair than words can  
say :

Bare-footed came the beggar maid  
Before the king Cophetua.  
In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
To meet and greet her on her way ;  
"It is no wonder," said the lords,  
"She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
She in her poor attire was seen :  
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,  
One her dark hair and lovesome  
mien.  
So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
In all that land had never been :  
Cophetua sware a royal oath :  
"This beggar maid shall be my  
queen ! "

## THE VISION OF SIN

I

I HAD a vision when the night was  
late :  
A youth came riding toward a palace-  
gate.

He rode a horse with wings, that  
would have flown,  
But that his heavy rider kept him  
down.  
And from the palace came a child of  
sin,  
And took him by the curls, and led  
him in,  
Where sat a company with heated  
eyes,  
Expecting when a fountain should  
arise :  
A sleepy light upon their brows and  
lips—  
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,  
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles  
and capes—  
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid  
shapes,  
By heaps of gourds, and skins of  
wine, and piles of grapes.

II

Then methought I heard a mellow  
sound,  
Gathering up from all the lower  
ground ;  
Narrowing in to where they sat  
assembled  
Low voluptuous music winding  
trembled,  
Wov'n in circles : they that heard it  
sigh'd,  
Panted hand in hand with faces pale,  
Swung themselves, and in low tones  
replied ;  
Till the fountain spouted, showering  
wide  
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly  
hail ;  
Then the music touch'd the gates and  
died ;  
Rose again from where it seem'd to  
fail,  
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing  
gale ;  
Till thronging in and in, to where they  
waited,  
As 'twere a hundred-throated night-  
ingale,  
The strong tempestuous treble  
throb'd and palpitated ;  
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,

Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,

Flung the torrent rainbow round :  
Then they started from their places,  
Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
Half-invisible to the view,  
Wheeling with precipitate paces  
To the melody, till they flew,  
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,  
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,  
Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
Dash'd together in blinding dew :  
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,  
The nerve-dissolving melody  
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

## III

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,  
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :  
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn  
Beyond the darkness and the cata-ract,  
God made himself an awful rose of dawn,  
Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,  
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,  
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
Came floating on for many a month and year,  
Unheeded : and I thought I would have spoken,  
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late :  
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,  
When that cold vapour touch'd the palace gate,  
And link'd again. I saw within my head  
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,  
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,  
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

## IV

“ Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !  
Here is custom come your way ;  
Take my brute, and lead him in,  
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

“ Bitter barmaid, waning fast !  
See that sheets are on my bed ;  
What ! the flower of life is past :  
It is long before you wed.

“ Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,  
At the Dragon on the heath !  
Let us have a quiet hour,  
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

“ I am old, but let me drink ;  
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;  
I remember, when I think,  
That my youth was half divine.

“ Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,  
When a blanket wraps the day,  
When the rotten woodland drips,  
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

“ Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
Check by jowl, and knee by knee ;  
What care I for any name ?  
What for order or degree ?

“ Let me screw thee up a peg :  
Let me loose thy tongue with wine :  
Callest thou that thing a leg ?  
Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

“ Thou shalt not be saved by works :  
Thou hast been a sinner too :  
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,  
Empty scarecrows, I and you !

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
Have a rouse before the morn :  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

“ We are men of ruin'd blood ;  
Therefore comes it we are wise.  
Fish are we that love the mud,  
Rising to no fancy-flies.

“ Name and fame ! to fly sublime  
 Thro’ the courts, the camps, the  
 schools,  
 Is to be the ball of Time,  
 Bandied by the hands of fools.

“ Friendship !—to be two in one—  
 Let the canting liar pack !  
 Well I know, when I am gone,  
 How she mouths behind my back.

“ Virtue !—to be good and just—  
 Every heart, when sifted well,  
 Is a clot of warmer dust,  
 Mix’d with cunning sparks of hell.

“ O ! we two as well can look  
 Whited thought and cleanly life  
 As the priest, above his book  
 Leering at his neighbour’s wife.

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
 Have a rouse before the morn :  
 Every moment dies a man,  
 Every moment one is born.

“ Drink, and let the parties rave :  
 They are fill’d with idle spleen ;  
 Rising, falling, like a wave,  
 For they know not what they mean.

“ He that roars for liberty  
 Faster binds a tyrant’s power ;  
 And the tyrant’s cruel glee  
 Forces on the freer hour.

“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
 All the windy ways of men  
 Are but dust that rises up,  
 And is lightly laid again.

“ Greet her with applausive breath,  
 Freedom, gaily doth she tread ;  
 In her right a civic wreath,  
 In her left a human head.

“ No, I love not what is new ;  
 She is of an ancient house :  
 And I think we know the hue  
 Of that cap upon her brows.

“ Let her go ! her thirst she slakes  
 Where the bloody conduit runs :  
 Then her sweetest meal she makes  
 On the first-born of her sons.

“ Drink to lofty hopes that cool—  
 Visions of a perfect State :  
 Drink we, last, the public fool,  
 Frantic love and frantic hate.

“ Chant me now some wicked stave,  
 Till thy drooping courage rise,  
 And the glow-worm of the grave  
 Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

“ Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;  
 Set thy hoary fancies free ;  
 What is loathsome to the young  
 Savours well to thee and me.

“ Change, reverting to the years,  
 When thy nerves could understand  
 What there is in loving tears,  
 And the warmth of hand in hand.

“ Tell me tales of thy first love—  
 April hopes, the fools of chance ;  
 Till the graves begin to move,  
 And the dead begin to dance.

“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
 All the windy ways of men  
 Are but dust that rises up,  
 And is lightly laid again.

“ Trooping from their mouldy dens  
 The chap-fallen circle spreads :  
 Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
 Hollow hearts and empty heads !

“ You are bones, and what of that ?  
 Every face, however full,  
 Padded round with flesh and fat,  
 Is but modell’d on a skull.

“ Death is king, and Vivat Rex !  
 Tread a measure on the stones,  
 Madam—if I know your sex,  
 From the fashion of your bones.

“ No, I cannot praise the fire  
 In your eye—nor yet your lip :  
 All the more do I admire  
 Joints of cunning workmanship.

“ Lo ! God’s likeness—the ground-  
 plan—  
 Neither modell’d, glazed, or  
 framed :  
 Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
 Far too naked to be shamed ! .

" Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,  
While we keep a little breath !  
Drink to heavy Ignorance !  
Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

" Thou art mazed, the night is long.  
And the longer night is near :  
What ! I am not all as wrong  
As a bitter jest is dear.

" Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
When the locks are crisp and curl'd ;  
Unto me my maudlin gall  
And my mockeries of the world.

" Fill the cup, and fill the can !  
Mingle madness, mingle scorn !  
Dregs of life, and lees of man :  
Yet we will not die forlorn."

## v

The voice grew faint : there came a further change :  
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range :  
Below were men and horses pierc'd with worms,  
And slowly quickening into lower forms ;  
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,  
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss.  
Then some one spake : " Behold ! it was a crime  
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time."  
Another said : " The crime of sense became  
The crime of malice, and is equal blame."  
And one : " He had not wholly quench'd his power ;  
A little grain of conscience made him sour."  
At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
Cry to the summit, " Is there any hope ? "  
To which an answer peal'd from that high land,  
But in a tongue no man could understand ;

And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn  
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

COME not, when I am dead,  
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,  
To trample round my fallen head,  
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldest not save.  
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry ;  
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime  
I care no longer, being all unblest :  
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,  
And I desire to rest.  
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie :  
Go by, go by.

## THE EAGLE

## FRAGMENT

He clasps the crag with hooked hands ;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave  
Yon orange sunset wan'ning slow :  
From fringes of the faded eve,  
O, happy planet, eastward go ;  
Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
To glass herself in dewy eyes  
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
Dip forward under starry light,  
And move me to my marriage-morn,  
And round again to happy night.

BREAK, break, break,

On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !  
And I would that my tongue could  
utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at  
play !

O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the  
bay !

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill ;  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd  
hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is  
still !

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !  
But the tender grace of a day that is  
dead  
Will never come back to me.

## THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He pass'd by the town and out of  
the street,  
A light wind blew from the gates of  
the sun,  
And waves of shadow went over  
the wheat,  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
And chanted a melody loud and  
sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in  
her cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the  
bee,  
The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down  
on his beak,  
And stared, with his foot on the  
prey,  
And the nightingale thought, " I  
have sung many songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away."

## THE PRINCESS : A MEDLEY

### PROLOGUE

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day  
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun  
Up to the people : thither flock'd at noon  
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half  
The neighbouring borough with their Institute  
Of which he was the patron. I was there  
From college, visiting the son,—the son  
A Walter too,—with others of our set,  
Five others : we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,  
Greek, set with busts : from vases in the hall  
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,  
Grew side by side ; and on the pavement lay  
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,  
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time :  
And on the tables every clime and age  
Jumbled together ; colts and calumets,  
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans  
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs

From the isles of palm : and higher on the walls,  
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,  
His own forefathers' arms and armour hung.

And "this" he said "was Hugh's at Agincourt ;  
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon :  
A good knight he ! we keep a chronicle  
With all about him"—which he brought, and I  
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights  
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings  
Who laid about them at their wills and died :  
And mixt with these, a lady, one that arm'd  
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,  
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

"O miracle of women," said the book,  
"O noble heart who, being strait-besieged  
By this wild king to force her to his wish,  
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,  
But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost—  
Her stature more than mortal in the burst  
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—

Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,  
And, falling on them like a thunder-bolt,  
She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,  
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall,  
And some were push'd with lances from the rock,  
And part were drown'd within the whirling brook:  
O miracle of womanhood!"

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;  
And, I all rapt in this, "Come out," he said,  
"To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth  
And sister Lilia with the rest." We went  
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)  
Down thro' the park: strange was the sight to me;  
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown  
With happy faces and with holiday.  
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads:  
The patient leaders of their Institute  
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a fount of stone  
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,  
The fountain of the moment, playing now  
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball  
Danced like a wisp: and somewhat lower down  
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired  
A cannon: Echo answer'd in her sleep  
From hollow fields: and here were telescopes  
For azure views; and there a group of girls.  
In circle waited, whom the electric

Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter: round the lake  
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied  
And shook the lilies: perch'd about the knolls  
A dozen angry models jetted steam: A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon  
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves  
And dropt a fairy parachute and past:  
And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph  
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
Between the mimic stations: so that sport  
Went hand in hand with Science; elsewhere  
Pure sport: a herd of boys with clamour bowl'd  
And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd about  
Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men and maids  
Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light  
And shadow, while the twangling violin  
Struck up with Soldier-laddic, and overhead  
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime  
Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time;  
And long we gazed, but satiated at length  
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,  
Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire. Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they gave  
The park, the crowd, the house; but all within  
The sward was trim as any garden lawn:  
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends  
From neighbour seats: and there was Ralph himself,

A broken statue propt against the wall,  
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
Half child half woman as she was, had wound  
A scarf of orange round the stony helm,  
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook  
Glow like a sunbeam : near his tomb a feast  
Shone, silver-set ; about it lay the guests,  
And there we join'd them : then the maiden Aunt  
Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd  
An universal culture for the crowd,  
And all things great ; but we, un-worthier, told  
Of college : he had climb'd across the spikes,  
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,  
And he had breath'd the Proctor's dogs ; and one  
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,  
But honeying at the whisper of a lord ;  
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain  
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.  
  
But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw  
The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which brought  
My book to mind : and opening this I read  
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang  
With tilt and tourney ; then the tale of her  
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,  
And much I praised her nobleness and "Where,"  
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay  
Beside him) "lives there such a woman now ? "

Quick answer'd Lilia "There are thousands now  
Such women, but convention beats them down :  
It is but bringing up ; no more than that :  
You men have done it : how I hate you all !  
Ah, were I something great ! I wish I were  
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,  
That love to keep us children ! O I wish  
That I were some great Princess, I would build  
Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are taught ;  
We are twice as quick ! " And here she shook aside  
The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.  
  
And one said smiling " Pretty were the sight  
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt  
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,  
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.  
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,  
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph  
Who shines so in the corner ; yet I fear,  
If there were many Lilias in the brood,  
However deep you might embower the nest,  
Some boy would spy it."  
At this upon the sward  
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot :  
" That's your light way ; but I would make it death  
For any male thing but to peep at us."  
  
Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd ;  
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,

And sweet as English air could make her, she :  
 But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,  
 And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful Puss,"  
 And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,  
 All else was well, for she-society. They boated and they cricketed ; they talk'd  
 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics ;  
 They lost their weeks ; they vext the souls of deans ;  
 They rode ; they betted ; made a hundred friends,  
 And caught the blossom of the flying terms,  
 But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,  
 The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,  
 Part banter, part affection.  
 "True," she said,  
 "We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us much,  
 I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did."

She held it out ; and as a parrot turns  
 Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
 And takes a lady's finger with all care,  
 And bites it for true heart and not for harm,  
 So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd  
 And wrung it. "Doubt my word again ! " he said.  
 "Come, listen I here is proof that you were miss'd :  
 We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read ;  
 And there we took one tutor as to read :  
 The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square  
 Were out of season : never man, I think,  
 So moulder'd in a sinecure as he :

For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,  
 And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,  
 We did but talk you over, pledge you all  
 In wassail ; often, like as many girls—  
 Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—  
 As many little trifling Lilias—play'd Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,  
 And what's my thought and when and where and how,  
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth  
 As here at Christmas."

She remember'd that :  
 A peasant game, she thought : she liked it more  
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.  
 But these—what kind of tales did men tell men,  
 She wonder'd, by themselves ?  
 A half-disdain  
 Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips :  
 And Walter nodded at me ; "He began,  
 The rest would follow, each in turn ; and so  
 We forged a sevenfold story. Kind ? what kind ?  
 Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,  
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill  
 Time by the fire in winter."

"Kill him now, The tyrant ! kill him in the summer too,"  
 Said Lilia : "Why not now," the maiden Aunt,  
 "Why not a summer's as a winter's tale ?  
 A tale for summer as befits the time,  
 And something it should be to suit the place,  
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath, Grave, solemn ! "

Walter warp'd his mouth at this  
 To something so mock-solemn, that  
 I laugh'd  
 And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling  
 mirth  
 An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,  
 Hid in the ruins; till the maiden  
 Aunt  
 (A little sense of wrong had touch'd  
 her face  
 With colour) turn'd to me with " As  
 you will;  
 Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
 Or be yourself your hero if you will."  
 " Take Lilia, then, for heroine,"  
 clamour'd he,  
 " And make her some great Princess,  
 six feet high,  
 Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you  
 The Prince to win her!"  
 " Then follow me, the Prince,"  
 I answer'd, " each be hero in his turn!  
 Seven and yet one, like shadows in a  
 dream.—  
 Heroic seems our Princess as re-  
 quired—  
 But something made to suit with  
 Time and place,  
 A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,  
 A talk of college and of ladies' rights,  
 A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
 And, yonder, shrieks and strange  
 experiments  
 For which the good Sir Ralph had  
 burnt them all—  
 This *were* a medley! we should have  
 him back  
 Who told the 'Winter's tale' to do  
 it for us.  
 No matter: we will say whatever  
 comes.  
 And let the ladies sing us, if they  
 will,  
 From time to time, some ballad or a  
 song  
 To give us breathing-space." So I began,  
 And the rest follow'd: and the women  
 sang  
 Between the rougher voices of the  
 men,  
 Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:  
 And here I give the story and the  
 songs.

## 1

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair  
 in face,  
 Of temper amorous, as the first of  
 May,  
 With lengths of yellow ringlets, like  
 a girl,  
 For on my cradle shone the Northern  
 star.

There lived an ancient legend in  
 our house.  
 Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grand-  
 sire burnt  
 Because he cast no shadow, had fore-  
 told,  
 Dying, that none of all our blood  
 should know  
 The shadow from the substance, and  
 that one  
 Should come to fight with shadows  
 and to fall.  
 For so, my mother said, the story ran.  
 And, truly, waking dreams were, more  
 or less,  
 An old and strange affection of the  
 house.  
 Myself too had weird seizures,  
 Heaven knows what:  
 On a sudden in the midst of men and  
 day,  
 And while I walk'd and talk'd as  
 heretofore,  
 I seem'd to move among a world of  
 ghosts,  
 And feel myself the shadow of a  
 dream.  
 Our great court-Galen poised his  
 gilt-head cane,  
 And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd  
 "catalepsy."  
 My mother pitying made a thousand  
 prayers;  
 My mother was as mild as any saint,  
 Half-canonized by all that look'd on  
 her,  
 So gracious was her tact and tender-  
 ness:  
 But my good father thought a king  
 a king;  
 He cared not for the affection of the  
 house;

He held his sceptre like a pedant's  
wand  
To lash offence, and with long arms  
and hands  
Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders  
from the mass  
For judgment.

Now it chanced that I  
had been,  
While life was yet in bud and blade,  
betroth'd  
To one, a neighbouring Princess :  
she to me  
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless  
calf  
At eight years old ; and still from  
time to time  
Came murmurs of her beauty from  
the South,  
And of her brethren, youths of puise-  
sance ;  
And still I wore her picture by my  
heart,  
And one dark tress ; and all around  
them both  
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees  
about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that  
I should wed,  
My father sent ambassadors with furs  
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her : these  
brought back  
A present, a great labour of the  
loom ;  
And therewithal an answer vague as  
wind :  
Besides, they saw the king ; he took  
the gifts ;  
He said there was a compact ; that  
was true :  
But then she had a will ; was he to  
blame ?  
And maiden fancies ; loved to live  
alone  
Among her women ; certain, would  
not wed.

That morning in the presence room  
I stood  
With Cyril and with Florian, my two  
friends :  
The first, a gentleman of broken  
means

(His father's fault) but given to starts  
and bursts  
Of revel ; and the last, my other  
heart,  
And almost my half-self, for still we  
moved  
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and  
eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my  
father's face  
Grow long and troubled like a rising  
moon,  
Inflamed with wrath : he started on  
his feet,  
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down,  
and rent  
The wonder of the loom thro' warp  
and woof  
From skirt to skirt ; and at the last  
he sware  
That he would send a hundred thou-  
sand men,  
And bring her in a whirlwind : then  
he chew'd  
The thrice turn'd cud of wrath, and  
cook'd his spleen,  
Communing with his captains of the  
war.

At last I spoke. " My father, let  
me go.  
It cannot be, but some gross error lies  
In this report, this answer of a king,  
Whom all men rate as kind and  
hospitable :  
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once  
seen,  
Whate'er my grief to find her less  
than fame,  
May rue the bargain made." And  
Florian said :  
" I have a sister at the foreign court,  
Who moves about the Princess ; she,  
you know,  
Who wedded with a nobleman from  
thence :  
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
The lady of three castles in that land :  
Thro' her this matter might be sifted  
clean."  
And Cyril whisper'd : " Take me  
with you too."

Then laughing " what, if these weird seizures come Upon you in those lands, and no one near To point you out the shadow from the truth ! Take me : I'll serve you better in a strait ; I grato' on rusty hinges here :" but " No ! " Roar'd the rough king, " you shall not ; we ourself Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead In iron gauntlets : break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and past Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town ; Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out ; Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed In the green gleam of the dewy-tasseled trees : What were those fancies ? wherefore break her troth ? Proud look'd the lips : but while I meditated A wind arose and rush'd upon the South, And shook the songs, the whispers and the shrieks Of the wild woods together ; and a Voice Went with it " Follow, follow, thou shalt win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month Became her golden shield, I stolc from court With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived, Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread To hear my father's clamour at our backs With Ho ! from some bay-window shake the night ; But all was quiet : from the bastion'd walls

Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt, And flying reach'd the frontier : then we crost To a livelier land ; and so by tilth and grange, And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness, We gain'd the mother-city thick with towers, And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama ; crack'd and small his voice, But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind On glassy water drove his cheek in lines : A little dry old man, without a star, Not like a king : three days he feasted us, And on the fourth I spake of why we came, And my betroth'd. " You do us, Prince," he said, Airing a snowy hand and signet gem, " All honour. We remember love ourselves In our sweet youth : there did a compact pass Long summers back, a kind of ceremony— I think the year in which our olives fail'd. I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart, With my full heart : but there were widows here, Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche ; They fed her theories, in and out of place Maintaining that with equal husbandry The woman were an equal to the man. They harp'd on this ; with this our banquets rang ; Our dances broke and buzz'd in knot of talk ; Nothing but this ; my very ears were hot



The land, he understood, for miles about  
Was till'd by women ; all the swine were sows,  
And all the dogs"—  
But while he jested thus,  
A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,  
Remembering how we three presented Maid  
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,  
In masque or pageant at my father's court.  
We sent mine host to purchase female gear ;  
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake  
The midriff of despair with laughter, help  
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes  
We rustled : him we gave a costly bribe  
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,  
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,  
And rode till midnight when the college lights  
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
And linden alley : then we past an arch,  
Whercon a woman-statue rose with wings  
From four wing'd horses dark against the stars ;  
And some inscription ran along the front,  
But deep in shadow : further on we gain'd  
A little street half garden and half house ;  
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise  
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling  
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
Of fountains spouted up and showering down  
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose :

And all about us peal'd the nightingale,  
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,  
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and Earth  
With constellation and with continent,  
Above an entry : riding in, we call'd ;  
A plump-arn'd Ostleress and a stable wench  
Came running at the call, and help'd us down,  
Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,  
Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave  
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost  
In laurel : her we ask'd of that and this,  
And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche," she said,  
"And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,  
Best-natured ?" "Lady Psyche."  
"Hers are we." One voice, we cried ; and I sat down  
and wrote,  
In such a hand as when a field of corn  
Bows all its ears before the roaring East ;  
" Three ladies of the Northern empire pray  
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,  
As Lady Psyche's pupils."

This I seal'd :  
The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,  
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes :  
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;  
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd  
To float about a glimmering night,  
and watch  
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell

On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.  
 As thro' the land at eve we went,  
 And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
 We fell out, my wife and I,  
 O we fell out I know not why,  
 And kiss'd again with tears.  
 And blessings on the falling out  
 That all the more endears,  
 When we fall out with those we love  
 And kiss again with tears !  
 For when we came where lies the child  
 We lost in other years,  
 There above the little grave,  
 O there above the little grave,  
 We kiss'd again with tears.

## II

At break of day the College Portress came :  
 She brought us Academic silks, in hue  
 The lilac, with a silken hood to each,  
 And zoned with gold ; and now when  
 these were on,  
 And we as rich as moths from dusk  
 cocoons,  
 She, curtseying her obeisance, let us  
 know  
 The Princess Ida waited : out we  
 paced,  
 I first, and following thro' the porch  
 that sang  
 All round with laurel, issued in a court  
 Compact with lucid marbles, boss'd  
 with lengths  
 Of classic frieze, with ample awnings  
 gay  
 Betwixt the pillars, and with great  
 urns of flowers.  
 The Muses and the Graces, group'd  
 in threes,  
 Earing'd a billowing fountain in the  
 midst ;  
 And here and there on lattice edges  
 lay  
 Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,  
 And up a flight of stairs into the hall.  
 There at a board by tome and paper  
 sat,  
 With two tame leopards couch'd be-  
 side her throne,  
 All beauty compass'd in a female  
 form,  
 The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant

Of some clear planet close upon the  
 Sun,  
 Than our man's earth ; such eyes  
 were in her head,  
 And so much grace and power,  
 breathing down  
 From over her arch'd brows, with  
 every turn  
 Lived thro' her to the tips of her long  
 hands,  
 And to her feet. She rose her height,  
 and said :  
 " We give you welcome : not with-  
 out redound  
 Of use and glory to yourselves ye  
 come,  
 The first-fruits of the stranger :  
 aftertime,  
 And that full voice which circles  
 round the grave,  
 Will rank you nobly, mingled up with  
 me.  
 What ! are the ladies of your land so  
 tall ? "  
 " We of the court," said Cyril. " From  
 the court "  
 She answer'd, " then ye know the  
 Prince ? " and he :  
 " The climax of his age ! as tho' there  
 were  
 One rose in all the world, your High-  
 ness that,  
 He worships your ideal : " she replied :  
 " We scarcely thought in our own  
 hall to hear  
 This barren verbiage, current among  
 men,  
 Light coin, the tinsel clink of compli-  
 ment.  
 Your flight from out your bookless  
 wilds would seem  
 As arguing love of knowledge and of  
 power ;  
 Your language proves you still the  
 child. Indeed,  
 We dream not of him : when we set  
 our hand  
 To this great work, we purposed with  
 ourself  
 Never to wed. You likewise will do  
 well,  
 Ladies, in entering here, to cast and  
 fling

The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so, Some future time, if so indeed you will, You may with those self-styled our lords ally Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale."

At those high words, we conscious of ourselves, Perused the matting; then an officer Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these: Not for three years to correspond with home; Not for three years to cross the liberties; Not for three years to speak with any men; And many more, which hastily subscribed, We enter'd on the boards: and "Now" she cried "Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall! Our statues!—not of those that men desire, Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode, Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she The foundress of the Babylonian wall, The Carian Artemisia strong in war, The Rhodope, that built the pyramid, Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose Convention, since to look on noble forms Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism That which is higher. O lift your natures up: Embrace our aims: work out your freedom. Girls, Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd: Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,

The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite And slander, die. Better not be at all Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go: To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue The fresh arrivals of the week before; For they press in from all the provinces, And fill the hive." She spoke, and bowing waved Dismissal: back again we crost the court To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in, There sat along the forms, like morning doves That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch, A patient range of pupils; she herself Erect behind a desk of satin-wood, A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed, And on the hither side, or so she look'd, Of twenty summers. At her left, a child, In shining draperies, headed like a star, Her maiden babo, a double April old, Aglaja slept. We sat: the Lady glanced: Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame That whisper'd " Asses' ears " among the sedge, " My sister." " Comely too by all that's fair " Said Cyril. " O hush, hush! " and she began. " This world was once a fluid haze of light, Till toward the centre set the starry tides, And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast The planets: then the monster, then the man; Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins, Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate:

<p>As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here Among the lowest."</p> <p>Thereupon she took A bird's-eye-view of all the ungra- cious past ;</p> <p>Glanced at the legendary Amazon As emblematic of a nobler age ;</p> <p>Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those</p> <p>That lay at wine with Lar and Lu- cumo ;</p> <p>Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Ro- man lines</p> <p>Of empire, and the woman's state in each,</p> <p>How far from just ; till warming with her theme</p> <p>She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique</p> <p>And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet</p> <p>With much contempt, and came to chivalry :</p> <p>When some respect, however slight, was paid</p> <p>To woman, superstition all awry : However then commenced the dawn : a beam</p> <p>Had slanted forward, falling in a land</p> <p>Of promise ; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,</p> <p>Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared</p> <p>To leap the rotten pales of preju- dice,</p> <p>Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert</p> <p>None lordlier than themselves but that which made</p> <p>Woman and man. She had founded ; they must build.</p> <p>Here might they learn whatever men were taught :</p> <p>Let them not fear : some said their heads were less :</p> <p>Some men's were small ; not they the least of men ;</p> <p>For often fineness compensated size : Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew</p> <p>With using ; thence the man's, if more was more ;</p>	<p>He took advantage of his strength to be</p> <p>First in the field : some ages had been lost ;</p> <p>But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life</p> <p>Was longer ; and albeit their glorious names</p> <p>Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth</p> <p>The highest is the measure of the man,</p> <p>And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay, Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,</p> <p>But Homer, Plato, Verulam ; even so</p> <p>With woman : and in arts of govern- ment</p> <p>Elizabeth and others ; arts of war</p> <p>The peasant Joan and others ; arts of grace</p> <p>Sappho and others vied with any man :</p> <p>And, last not least, she who had left her place,</p> <p>And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow</p> <p>To use and power on this Oasis, lapt</p> <p>In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight</p> <p>Of ancient influence and scorn.</p> <p>At last</p> <p>She rose upon a wind of prophecy</p> <p>Dilating on the future ; "everywhere</p> <p>Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,</p> <p>Two in the tangled business of the world,</p> <p>Two in the liberal offices of life,</p> <p>Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss</p> <p>Of science, and the secrets of the mind :</p> <p>Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more :</p> <p>And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth</p> <p>Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,</p> <p>Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world."</p> <p>She ended here, and beckon'd us the rest</p>
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Parted ; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she  
 Began to address us, and was moving on  
 In gratulation, till as when a boat  
 Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all  
 her voice  
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat,  
 she cried  
 " My brother ! " " Well, my sister."  
 " O " she said  
 " What do you here ? and in this dress ? and these ?  
 Why who are these ? a wolf within the fold !  
 A pack of wolves ! the Lord be gracious to me !  
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all ! "  
 " No plot, no plot," he answer'd.  
 " Wretched boy,  
 How saw you not the inscription on the gate,  
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH ? "  
 " And if I had " he answer'd " who could think  
 The softer Adams of your Academe,  
 O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such  
 As chant on the blanching bones of men ? "  
 " But you will find it otherwise " she said.  
 " You jest : ill jesting with edge-tools ! my vow  
 Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,  
 That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,  
 The Princess." " Well then, Psyche, take my life,  
 And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
 For warning : bury me beside the gate,  
 And cut this epitaph above my bones ;  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,  
 All for the common good of woman-kind.*"  
 " Let me die too " said Cyril " having seen  
 And heard the Lady Psyche." I struck in :  
 " Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth ;  
 Receive it ; and in me behold the Prince  
 Your countryman, affianced years ago  
 To the Lady Ida : here, for here she was,  
 And thus (what other way was left) I came."  
 " O Sir, O Prince, I have no country ; none ;  
 If any, this ; but none. Whate'er I was  
 Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.  
 Affianced, Sir ? love-whispers may not breathe  
 Within this vestal limit, and how should I,  
 Who am not mine, say, live : the thunderbolt  
 Hangs silent ; but prepare : I speak ; it falls."  
 " Yet pause," I said : " for that inscription there,  
 I think no more of deadly lurks therein,  
 Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
 To scare the fowl from fruit : if more there be,  
 If more and acted on, what follows ? war ;  
 Your own work marr'd : for this your Academe,  
 Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo  
 Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass  
 With all fair theories only made to gild  
 A stormless summer." " Let the Princess judge  
 Of that " she said : " farewell Sir—and to you.  
 I shudder at the sequel, but I go."  
 " Are you that Lady Psyche " I rejoin'd,  
 " The fifth in line from that old Florian,  
 Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall  
 (The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow  
 Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)

<p>As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,      And all else fled : we point to it, and we say,      The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,      But branches current yet in kindred veins."</p> <p>"Are you that Psyche" Florian added "she      With whom I sang about the morning hills,      Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,      And snared the squirrel of the glen ? are you      That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,      To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming draught      Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read      My sickness down to happy dreams ? are you      That brother-sister Psyche, both in one ?      You were that Psyche, but what are you now ?"      "You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for whom      I would be that for ever which I seem      Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,      And glean your scatter'd sapience.' Then once more,      "Are you that Lady Psyche" I began,      "That on her bridal morn before she past      From all her old companions, when the king      Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties      Would still be dear beyond the southern hills ;      That were there any of our people there      In want or peril, there was one to hear      And help them : look ! for such are these and I."      "Are you that Psyche" Florian ask'd "to whom,</p>	<p>In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn      Came flying while you sat beside the well ?      The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,      And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the blood      Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.      That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.      O by the bright head of my little niece,      You were that Psyche, and what are you now ?"      "You are that Psyche" Cyril said again,      "The mother of the sweetest little maid,      That ever crow'd for kisses."      "Out upon it !"      She answer'd, "peace ! and why should I not play      The Spartan Mother with emotion, be      The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind ?      Him you call great : he for the common weal,      The fading politics of mortal Rome,      As I might slay this child, if good need were,      Slew both his sons : and I, shall I, on whom      The secular emancipation turns      Of half this world, be swerved from right to save      A prince, a brother ? a little will I yield.      Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.      O hard, when love and duty clash ! I fear      My conscience will not count me fleckless ; yet—      Hear my conditions : promise (otherwise      You perish) as you came, to slip away,      To-day, to-morrow, soon : it shall be said,      These women were too barbarous, would not learn ;      They fled, who might have shamed us : promise, all."</p>
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What could we else, we promised  
each ; and she,  
Like some wild creature newly-caged,  
commenced  
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
By Florian : holding out her lily  
arms  
Took both his hands, and smiling  
faintly said :  
" I knew you at the first : tho' you  
have grown  
You scarce have alter'd : I am sad and  
glad  
To see you, Florian. I give thee to  
death  
My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I.  
My needful seeming harshness, par-  
don it.  
Our mother, is she well ? "  
With that she kiss'd  
His forehead, then, a moment after,  
clung  
About him, and betwixt them blos-  
som'd up  
From out a common vein of memory  
Sweet household talk, and phrases of  
the hearth,  
And far allusion, till the gracious dews  
Began to glisten and to fall : and  
while  
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came  
a voice,  
" I brought a message here from  
Lady Blanche."  
Back started she, and turning round  
we saw  
The Lady Blanche's daughter where  
she stood.  
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,  
That clad her like an April daffodilly  
(Her mother's colour) with her lips  
apart,  
And all her thoughts as fair within  
her eyes,  
As bottom agates seen to wave and  
float  
In crystal currents of clear morning  
seas.  
  
So stood that same fair creature at  
the door.  
Then Lady Psyche " Ah—Melissa—  
you !

You heard us ? " and Melissa, " O  
pardon me !  
I heard, I could not help it, did not  
wish :  
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me  
not,  
Nor think I bear that heart within my  
breast,  
To give three gallant gentlemen to  
death."  
" I trust you " said the other " for  
we two  
Were always friends, none closer, elm  
and vine :  
But yet your mother's jealous tem-  
perament—  
Let not your prudence, dearest,  
drowse, or prove  
The Danaid of a leaky vase, for fear  
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
My honour, these their lives." " Ah,  
fear me not "  
Replied Melissa " no—I would not  
tell,  
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
No, not to answer, Madam, all those  
hard things  
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."  
" Be it so " the other " that we still  
may lead  
The new light up, and culminate in  
peace,  
For Solomon may come to Sheba  
yet."  
Said Cyril " Madam, he the wisest  
man  
Feasted the woman wisest then, in  
halls  
Of Lebanon cedar : nor should you  
(Thro' madam you should answer, we  
would ask)  
Less welcome find among us, if you  
came  
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,  
Myself for something more." He said  
not what,  
But " Thanks," she answer'd " go :  
we have been too long  
Together : keep your hoods about  
the face ;  
They do so that affect abstraction  
here.  
Speak little ; mix not with the rest;  
and hold

Your promise: all, I trust, may yet  
be well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the  
child,  
And held her round the knees against  
his waist,  
And blew the swell'n cheek of a  
trumpeter,  
Whilst Psyche watch'd them, smiling,  
and the child  
Push'd her flat hand against his face  
and laugh'd;  
And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd  
For half the day thro' stately theatres  
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we  
sat, we heard  
The grave Professor. On the lecture  
state  
The circle rounded under female  
hands  
With flawless demonstration: follow'd  
then  
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted  
out  
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
And quoted odes, and jewels five-  
words-long  
That on the stretch'd forefinger of all  
Time  
Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all  
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
The morals, something of the frame,  
the rock,  
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell,  
the flower,  
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
And whatsoever can be taught and  
known:  
Till like three horses that have broken  
fence,  
And glutted all night long breast-deep  
in corn,  
We issued gorged with knowledge,  
and I spoke:  
"Why, Sirs, they do all this as well  
as we."  
"They hunt old trails" said Cyril  
"very well;  
But when did woman ever yet in-  
vent?"

"Ungracious!" answer'd Florian,  
"have you learnt  
No more from Psyche's lecture, you  
that talk'd  
The trash that made me sick, and  
almost sad?"  
"O trash" he said "but with a ker-  
nel in it.  
Should I not call her wise, who made  
me wise?  
And learnt? I learnt more from her  
in a flash,  
Than if my brainpan were an empty  
hull,  
And every Muse tumbled a science  
in.  
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these  
halls,  
And round these halls a thousand  
baby loves  
Fly twanging headless arrows at the  
hearts,  
Whence follows many a vacant pang;  
but O  
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger  
boy,  
The Head of all the golden-shafted  
firm,  
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche  
too;  
He cleft me thro' the stomacher;  
and now  
What think you of it, Florian? do I  
chase  
The substance or the shadow? will it  
hold?  
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,  
No ghostly hauntings like his High-  
ness. I  
Flatter myself that always every-  
where  
I know the substance when I see it.  
Well,  
Are castles shadows? Three of  
them? Is she  
The sweet proprietress a shadow?  
If not,  
Shall those three castles patch my  
tatter'd coat?  
For dear are those three castles to  
my wants,  
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,  
And two dear things are one of double  
worth,

And much I might have said, but  
that my zone  
Unmann'd me: then the Doctors!  
O to hear  
The Doctors! O to watch the  
thirsty plants  
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to  
roar,  
To break my chain, to shake my  
mane: but thou,  
Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimi-  
cry!  
Make liquid treble of that bassoon,  
my throat;  
Abase those eyes that ever loved to  
meet  
Star-sisters answering under crescent  
brows;  
Abate the stride, which speaks of man,  
and loose  
A flying charm of blushes o'er this  
cheek,  
Where they like swallows coming  
out of time  
Will wonder why they came: but  
hark the bell  
For dinner, let us go!"  
And in we stream'd  
Among the columns, pacing staid and  
still  
By twos and threes, till all from end  
to end  
With beauties every shade of brown  
and fair,  
In colours gayer than the morning  
mist,  
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of  
flowers.  
How might a man not wander from  
his wits  
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I  
kept mine own  
Intent on her, who rapt in glorious  
dreams,  
The second-sight of some Astræan  
age,  
Sat compass'd with professors: they,  
the while,  
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and  
fro:  
A clamour thicken'd, mixt with in-  
most terms  
Of art and science: Lady Blanche  
alone

Of faded form and haughtiest linea-  
ments,  
With all her autumn tresses falsely  
brown,  
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-  
cat  
In act to spring.  
At last a solemn grace  
Concluded, and we sought the gar-  
dens: there  
One walk'd reciting by herself, and  
one  
In this hand held a volume as to  
read,  
And smoothed a petted peacock down  
with that:  
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop  
by,  
Or under arches of the marble  
bridge  
Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some  
hid and sought  
In the orange thickets: others lost  
a ball  
Above the fountain-jets, and back  
again  
With laughter: others lay about the  
lawns,  
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that  
their May  
Was passing: what was learning unto  
them?  
They wish'd to marry; they could  
rule a house;  
Men hated learned women: but we  
three  
Sat muffled like the Fates; and often  
came  
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
That harm'd not: then day droopt;  
the chapel bells  
Call'd us: we left the walks; we  
mixt with those  
Six hundred maidens clad in purest  
white,  
Before two streams of light from wall  
to wall,  
While the great organ almost burst  
his pipes,  
Groaning for power, and rolling thro'  
the court  
A long melodious thunder to the  
sound

Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,  
The work of Ida, to call down from  
Heaven

A blessing on her labours for the  
world

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
Wind of the western sea !  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
Blow him again to me ;  
While my little one, while my pretty one,  
sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
Father will come to thee soon ;  
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
Father will come to thee soon ;  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west  
Under the silver moon :  
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,  
sleep.

## III

MORN in the white wake of the morn-  
ing star  
Came furrowing all the orient into  
gold.  
We rose, and each by other drest with  
care  
Descended to the courts that lay  
three parts  
In shadow, but the Muses' heads  
were touch'd  
Above the darkness from their native  
East.

There while we stood beside the  
fount, and watch'd  
Or seem'd to watch the dancing  
bubble, approach'd  
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack  
of sleep,  
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy  
eyes  
The circled Iris of a night of tears ;  
" And fly " she cried, " O fly,  
while yet you may !  
My mother knows : " and when I  
ask'd her " how "  
" My fault " she wept " my fault !  
and yet not mine ;

Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon  
me.

My mother, 'tis her wont from night  
to night

To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.  
She says the Princess should have

been the Head,  
Herself and Lady Psyche the two  
arms ;

And so it was agreed when first they  
came :

But Lady Psyche was the right hand  
now,

And she the left, or not, or seldom  
used :

Hers more than half the students, all  
the love.

And so last night she fell to canvass  
you :

Her countrywomen ! she did not envy  
her.

" Who ever saw such wild barbarians ?  
Girls ?—more like men ! " and at  
these words the snake,  
My secret, seem'd to stir within my

breast ;  
And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my  
cheek

Began to burn and burn, and her lynx  
eye

To fix and make me hotter, till she  
laugh'd :

" O marvellously modest maiden,  
you !

Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they  
had been men

You need not set your thoughts in  
rubric thus

For wholesale comment." Pardon,  
I am shamed

That I must needs repeat for my  
excuse

What looks so little graceful :  
" men " (for still

My mother went revolving on the  
word)

" And so they are,—very like men  
indeed—

And with that woman closeted for  
hours ! "

Then came these dreadful words out  
one by one,

" Why—these—are—men : " I shud-  
der'd : " and you know it."

" O ask me nothing," I said : " And  
she knows too,  
And she conceals it." So my mother  
clutch'd  
The truth at once, but with no word  
from me :  
And now thus early risen she goes to  
inform  
The Princess : Lady Psyche will be  
crush'd ;  
But you may yet be saved, and there-  
fore fly :  
But heal me with your pardon ere you  
go."

" What pardon, sweet Melissa, for  
a blush ? "  
Said Cyril : " Palo one, blush again :  
than wear  
Those lilies, better blush our lives  
away.  
Yet let us breathe for one hour more  
in Heaven "  
He added, " lest some classic Angel  
speak  
In scorn of us, ' they mounted, Gany-  
medes,  
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second  
morn.'  
But I will melt this marble into wax  
To yield us farther furlough : " and  
he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls,  
and thought  
He scarce would prosper. " Tell us,"  
Florian ask'd,  
" How grew this feud betwixt the  
right and left."  
" O long ago," she said, " betwixt  
these two  
Division smoulders hidden ; 'tis my  
mother,  
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
Pent in a crevice : much I bear with  
her :  
I never knew my father, but she says  
(God help her) she was wedded to a  
fool :  
And still she rail'd against the state  
of things.  
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
And from the Queen's decease she  
brought her up.

But when your sister came she won  
the heart  
Of Ida : they were still together,  
grew  
(For so they said themselves) inoscu-  
lated ;  
Consonant chords that shiver to one  
note ;  
One mind in all things : yet my mother  
still  
Affirms your Psyche thieved her  
theories,  
And angled with them for her pupil's  
love :  
She calls her plagiarist ; I know not  
what :  
But I must go : I dare not tarry," and  
light,  
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.  
Then murmur'd Florian gazing  
after her.  
" An open-hearted maiden, true and  
pure.  
If I could love, why this were she :  
how pretty  
Her blushing was, and how she  
blush'd again,  
As if to close with Cyril's random  
wish :  
Not like your Princess cramm'd with  
erring pride,  
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags  
in tow."

" The crane," I said, " may chatter  
of the crane,  
The dove may murmur of the dove,  
but I  
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.  
My princess, O my princess ! true she  
errs,  
But in her own grand way : being  
herself  
Three times more noble than three-  
score of men,  
She sees herself in every woman else,  
And so she wears her error like a  
crown  
To blind the truth and me : for her,  
and her,  
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix  
The nectar ; but—ah she—whene'er  
she moves

The Samian Herè rises and she speaks  
A Memnon smitten with the morning  
Sun."

So saying from the court we paced,  
and gain'd  
The terrace ranged along the Northern  
front,  
And leaning there on those balusters,  
high  
Above the empurpled champaign,  
drank the gale  
That blown about the foliage under-  
neath,  
And sated with the innumerable rose,  
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither  
came  
Cyril, and yawning "O hard task,"  
he cried;  
"No fighting shadows here! I forced  
a way  
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and  
gnarl'd.  
Better to clear prime forests, heave  
and thump  
A league of street in summer solstice  
down,  
Than hammer at this reverend gentle-  
woman.  
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd;  
found her there  
At point to move, and settled in her  
eyes  
The green malignant light of coming  
storm.  
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase  
well-oil'd,  
As man's could be; yet maiden-  
meek I pray'd  
Concealment: she demanded who  
we were,  
And why we came? I fabled nothing  
fair,  
But, your example pilot, told her all.  
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand  
and eye.  
But when I dwelt upon your old  
affiance,  
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd  
astray.  
I urged the fierce inscription on the  
gate,  
And our three lives. True—we had  
limed ourselves

With open eyes, and we must take the  
chance.  
But such extremes, I told her, well  
might harm  
The woman's cause. "Not more  
than now," she said,  
"So puddled as it is with favouritism."  
I tried the mother's heart. Shame  
might befall  
Melissa, knowing, saying not she  
knew:  
Her answer was "Leave me to deal  
with that."  
I spoke of war to come and many  
deaths,  
And she replied, her duty was to  
speak,  
And duty duty, clear of consequences.  
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I  
knew  
No rock so hard but that a little wave  
May beat admission in a thousand  
years,  
I recommended; "Decide not ere you  
pause.  
I find you here but in the second  
place,  
Some say the third—the authentic  
foundress you.  
I offer boldly: we will seat you  
highest:  
Wink at our advent: help my prince  
to gain  
His rightful bride, and here I promise  
you  
Some palace in our land, where you  
shall reign  
The head and heart of all our fair  
she-world,  
And your great name flow on with  
broadening time  
For ever." Well, she balanced this  
a little,  
And told me she would answer us  
to-day,  
Meantime be mute: thus much, nor  
more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from  
the Head.  
"That afternoon the Princess rode  
to take  
The dip of certain strata to the North.

Would we go with her ? we should  
find the land  
Worth seeing ; and the river made  
a fall  
Out yonder : " then she pointed on  
to where  
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks  
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of  
the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on  
thro' all  
Its range of duties to the appointed  
hour.  
Then summon'd to the porch we  
went. She stood  
Among her maidens, higher by the  
head,  
Her back against a pillar, her foot on  
one  
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike  
he roll'd  
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew  
near ;  
I gazed. On a sudden my strange  
seizure came  
Upon me, the weird vision of our  
house :  
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow  
show.  
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,  
Her college and her maidens, empty  
masks,  
And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
For all things were and were not.  
Yet I felt  
My heart beat thick with passion and  
with awe ;  
Then from my breast the involuntary  
sigh  
Brake, as she smote me with the light  
of eyes  
That lent my knee desire to kneel,  
and shook  
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
Went forth in long retinue following  
up  
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she  
said :  
" O friend, we trust that you esteem'd  
us not

Too harsh to your companion yester-  
morn ;  
Unwillingly we spake." " No—not  
to her,"  
I answer'd, " but to one of whom we  
spake  
Your Highness might have seem'd the  
thing you say."  
" Again ? " she cried " are you  
ambassadorres  
From him to me ? we give you, being  
strange,  
A license : speak, and let the topic  
die."

I stammer'd that I knew him—  
could have wish'd—  
" Our king expects—was there no  
precontract ?  
There is no truer-hearted—ah, you  
seem  
All he presfigured, and he could not  
see  
The bird of passage flying south but  
long'd  
To follow : surely, if your Highness  
keep  
Your purport, you will shock him  
ev'n to death,  
Or baser courses, children of despair."

" Poor boy " she said " can he not  
read—no books ?  
Quoit, tennis, ball—no games ? nor  
deals in that  
Which men delight in, martial exer-  
cise ?  
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
Methinks he seems no better than a  
girl ;  
As girls were once, as we ourself have  
been :  
We had our dreams : perhaps he mixt  
with them :  
We touch on our dead self, nor shun  
to do it,  
Being other—since we learnt our  
meaning here,  
To lift the woman's fall'n divinity,  
Upon an even pedestal with man.

She paused, and added with a  
haughtier smile  
" And as to precontracts, we move,  
my friend,

At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,	Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die
O Vashti, noble Vashti ! Summon'd out	They with the sun and moon renew their light
She kept her state, and left the drunken king	For ever, blessing those that look on them
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms "	Children—that men may pluck them from our hearts, Kill us with pity, break us with our- selves—
" Alas your Highness breathes full East," I said,	O—children—there is nothing upon earth
" On that which leans to you I know the Prince,	More miserable than she that has a son
I prize his truth and then how vast a work	And sees him err nor would we work for fame,
To assail this gray preeminence of man !	Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,
You grant me license, might I use it ? think .	Who learns the one POU STO whence after-hands
Ere half be done perchance your life may fail ,	May move the world, tho' she herself effect
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,	But little wherefore up and act, nor shrink
And takes and ruins all ; and thus your pains	For fear our solid aim be dissipated By frail successors Would, indeed, we had been,
May only make that footprint upon sand	In lieu of many mortal flies a race Of giants living, each, a thousand years,
Which old-recurring waves of pre- judice	That we might see our own work out, and watch
Resmooth to nothing might I dread that you,	The sandy footprint harden into stone."
With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds	1 answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
For issue, yet may live in vain, and muss,	If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,	Imaginations might at all be won And she broke out interpreting my thoughts
Love, childiev, happiness ? "	" No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you ;
And she exclaim'd,	We are used to that for women, up till this
" Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild !	Cramp'd under worse than South- sea-isle taboo,
What ! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's,	Dwarfs of the gynæcum, fail so far In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
Have we not made ourself the sacri- fice ?	How much their welfare is a passion to us.
You are bold indeed we are not talk'd to thus	
Yet will we say for children, would they grew	
Like field-flowers everywhere ! we like them well	
But children die , and let me tell you, gurl,	

If we could give them surer, quicker proof—  
 Oh if our end were less achievable  
 By slow approaches, than by single act  
 Of immolation, any phase of death,  
 We were as prompt to spring against  
 the pikes,  
 Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
 To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear ;  
 And up we came to where the river sloped  
 To plunge in cataract, shattering on  
 black blocks  
 A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook  
 the woods,  
 And danced the colour, and, below,  
 stuck out  
 The bones of some vast bulk that  
 lived and roar'd  
 Before man was. She gazed awhile  
 and said,  
 " As these rude bones to us, are we  
 to her  
 That will be." " Dare we dream of  
 that," I ask'd,  
 " Which wrought us, as the workman  
 and his work,  
 That practic betters ? " " How,"  
 she cried, " you love  
 The metaphysics ! read and earn our  
 prize,  
 A golden broach : beneath an  
 emerald plane  
 Sits Dictima, tauching him that died  
 Of hemlock ; our device ; wrought  
 to the life ;  
 She rapt upon her subject, he on her :  
 For there are schools for all." " And  
 yet " I said  
 " Methinks I have not found among  
 them all  
 One anatomic." " Nay, we thought  
 of that,"  
 She answer'd, " but it pleased us  
 not : in truth  
 We shudder but to dream our maids  
 should ape  
 Those monstrous males that carve  
 the living hound,  
 And cram him with the fragments of  
 the grave,

Or in the dark dissolving human  
 heart,  
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,  
 Dabbling a shameless hand with  
 shameful jest,  
 Encarnalize their spirits : yet we  
 know  
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this  
 matter hangs :  
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
 Nor willing men should come among  
 us, learnt,  
 For many weary moons before we  
 came,  
 This craft of healing. Were you  
 sick, ourself  
 Would tend upon you. To your  
 question now,  
 Which touches on the workman and  
 his work.  
 Let there be light and there was  
 light : 'tis so :  
 For was, and is, and will be, are but  
 is ;  
 And all creation is one act at once,  
 The birth of light : but we that are  
 not all,  
 As parts, can see but parts, now this,  
 now that,  
 And live, perforse, from thought to  
 thought, and make  
 One act a phantom of succession :  
 thus  
 Our weakness somehow shapes the  
 shadow, Time ;  
 But in the shadow will we work, and  
 mould  
 The woman to the fuller day."  
 She spake  
 With kindled eyes : we rode a league  
 beyond,  
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood cross-  
 ing, came  
 On flowery levels underneath the  
 crag,  
 Full of all beauty. " O how sweet "  
 I said  
 (For I was half-oblivious of my mask)  
 " To linger here with one that loved  
 us." " Yea "  
 She answer'd " or with fair philo-  
 sophies  
 That lift the fancy ; for indeed these  
 fields

Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,  
Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw  
The soft white vapour streak the crowned towers  
Built to the Sun : " then, turning to her maids,  
" Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward ;  
Lay out the viands." At the word, they raised  
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
With fair Corinna's triumph ; here she stood,  
Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,  
The woman-conqueror ; woman-conquer'd there  
The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,  
And all the men mourn'd at his side : but we  
Set forth to climb ; then, climbing, Cyril kept  
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
With mine affianced. Many a little hand  
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,  
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set  
In the dark crag : and then we turn'd, we wound  
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names  
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,  
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun  
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all  
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

The splendour falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story :  
The long light shakes across the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, farther going !  
O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !  
Blow, let us hear the purple gleus replying :  
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river :  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow for ever and for ever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying.  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

## IV

THERE sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,  
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound."  
Said Ida ; " let us down and rest ;" and we  
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,  
By every coppice-feather'd chasm and cleft,  
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where below  
No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent  
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd on me,  
Descending ; once or twice she leant her hand,  
And blissful palpitations in the blood,  
Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet,  
And dipt beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,  
There leaning deep in broider'd down we sank  
Our elbows : on a tripod in the midst  
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd  
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine,  
and gold.

Then she " Let some one sing to us : lightlier move

The minutes fledged with music : ”  
and a maid,  
Of those beside her, smote her harp,  
and sang.

“ Tears, idle tears, I know not  
what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine  
despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the  
eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn-  
fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no  
more.

“ Fresh as the first beam glittering  
on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the  
underworld,  
Sad as the last which reddens over  
one  
That sinks with all we love below the  
verge ;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no  
more.

“ Ah, sad and strange as in dark  
summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd  
birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glim-  
mering square ;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are  
no more.

“ Dear as remember'd kisses after  
death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy  
feign'd  
On lips that are for others ; deep as  
love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all  
regret ;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no  
more.”

She ended with such passion that  
the tear,  
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring  
pearl  
Lost in her bosom : but with some  
disdain

Answer'd the Princess “ If indeed  
there haunt  
About the moulder'd lodges of the  
Past  
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to  
men,  
Well needs it we should cram our ears  
with wool  
And so pace by : but thine are fancies  
hatch'd  
In silken-folded idleness ; nor is it  
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,  
But trim our sails, and let old bygones  
be,  
While down the streams that float  
us each and all  
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs  
of ice,  
Throne after throne, and molten on  
the waste  
Becomes a cloud : for all things serve  
their time  
Toward that great year of equal  
mights and rights,  
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in  
the end  
Found golden : let the past be past ;  
let be  
Their cancell'd Babels : tho' the  
rough kex break  
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-  
blown goat  
Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-  
tree split  
Their monstrous idols, care not while  
we hear  
A trumpet in the distance pealing  
news  
Of better, and Hope, a poising eagle,  
burns  
Above the unrisen morrow : ” then  
to me ;  
“ Know you no song of your own  
land,” she said,  
“ Not such as moans about the retro-  
spect,  
But deals with the other distance and  
the hues  
Of promise ; not a death's-head at  
the wine.”

Then I remember'd one myself had  
made,

What time I watch'd the swallow  
wining south  
From mine own land, part made long  
since, and part  
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as  
far  
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

" O Swallow, Swallow, flying, fly-  
ing South,  
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded  
eaves,  
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to  
thee.

" O tell her, Swallow, thou that  
knowest each,  
That bright and fierce and fickle is  
the South,  
And dark and true and tender is the  
North.

" O Swallow, Swallow, if I could  
follow, and light  
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and  
trill,  
And cheep and twitter twenty million  
loves.

" O were I thou that she might  
take me in,  
And lay me on her bosom, and her  
heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I  
died.

" Why lingereth she to clothe her  
heart with love,  
Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods  
are green ?

" O tell her, Swallow, that thy  
brood is flown :  
Say to her, I do but wanton in the  
South,  
But in the North long since my nest  
is made.

" O tell her, brief is life but love is  
long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the  
North,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the  
South.

" O Swallow, flying from the golden  
woods,  
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and  
make her mine,  
And tell her, tell her, that I follow  
thee."

I ceased, and all the ladies, each  
at each,  
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old  
time,  
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd  
with alien lips,  
And knew not what they meant ; for  
still my voice  
Rang false : but smiling " Not for  
thee," she said,  
" O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers,  
rather, maid,  
Shall croak thee sister, or the mead-  
ow-crake  
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass :  
and this  
A mere love-poem ! O for such, my  
friend,  
We hold them slight : they mind us  
of the time  
When we made bricks in Egypt.  
Knaves are men,  
That lute and flute fantastic tender-  
ness,  
And dress the victim to the offering  
up,  
And paint the gates of Hell with  
Paradise,  
And play the slave to gain the  
tyranny.  
Poor soul ! I had a maid of honour  
once ;  
She wept her true eyes blind for such  
a one,  
A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
I loved her. Peace be with her. She  
is dead.  
So they blaspheme the muse ! But  
great is song  
Used to great ends : ourself have  
often tried  
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm  
have dash'd  
The passion of the prophetess ; for  
song

Is duer unto freedom, force and growth  
Of spirit than to junketing and love.  
Love is it? Would this same mock-love, and this  
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,  
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,  
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered  
Whole in ourselves and owed to none.  
Enough!  
But now to leaven play with profit, you,  
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,  
That gives the manners of your countrywomen?"

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head with eyes  
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.  
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,  
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass had wrought,  
Or master'd by the sense of sport, began  
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch  
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences  
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,  
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and shook;  
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;  
"Forbear" the Princess cried;  
"Forbear, Sir" I;  
And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and love,  
I smote him on the breast; he started up;  
There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;  
Melissa clamour'd "Flee the death;"  
"To horse"  
Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and fled, as flies  
A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,

When some one batters at the dove-cote-doors,  
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood  
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,  
In the pavilion: there like parting hopes  
I heard them passing from me: hoof by hoof,  
And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
Clang'd on the bridge; and then another shriek,  
"The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the Head!"  
For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and roll'd  
In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom:  
There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch  
Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,  
No more; but woman-vested as I was  
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught her; then  
Caring one arm, and bearing in my left  
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,  
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree  
Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd  
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave  
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,  
And grasping down the boughs I gain'd the shore.  
There stood her maidens glimmeringly group'd  
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew  
My burthen from mine arms; they cried "she lives!"  
They bore her back into the tent: but I,  
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,  
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,

Nor found my friends; but push'd alone on foot  
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)  
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft  
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length  
The garden portals. Two great statues, Art  
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves  
Of open-work in which the hunter rued  
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows  
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon  
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,  
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,  
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,  
And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,  
Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,  
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd  
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step  
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,  
Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this were she"  
But it was Florian. "Hist O Hist," he said,  
"They seek us: out so late is out of rules.  
Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the cry.  
How came you here?" I told him: "I," said he,  
"Last of the train, a moral leper,  
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.  
Arriving all confused among the rest

With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath  
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.  
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each  
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last of all,  
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.  
She, question'd if she knew us men, at first  
Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:  
And then, demanded if her mother knew,  
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:  
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,  
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent  
For Psyche, but she was not there; she call'd  
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;  
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;  
And I slipt out: but whither will you now?  
And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled:  
What, if together? that were not so well.  
Would rather we had never come!  
I dread His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more than I  
That struck him: this is proper to the clown,  
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,  
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame  
That which he says he loves: for Cyril, how'er  
He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song  
Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips

Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold  
These flashes on the surface are not  
    he.

He has a solid base of temperament :  
But as the waterlily starts and slides  
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,  
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is  
    he."

Scarce had I ceased when from a  
    tamarisk near  
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,  
    "Names :"

He, standing still, was clutch'd ; but  
    I began  
To thrid the musky-circled mazes,  
    wind  
And double in and out the boles,  
    and race  
By all the fountains : fleet I was of  
    foot :  
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes ;  
    behind  
I heard the puff'd pursuer ; at mine  
    ear  
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded  
    not,  
And secret laughter tickled all my  
    soul.

At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,  
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
And falling on my face was caught  
    and known.

They haled us to the Princess where  
    she sat  
High in the hall : above her droop'd  
    a lamp,  
And made the single jewel on her  
    brow  
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-  
    head,  
Prophet of storm : a handmaid on  
    each side  
Bow'd toward her, combing out her  
    long black hair  
Damp from the river ; and close be-  
    hind her stood  
Eight daughters of the plough,  
    stronger than men,  
Huge women blowzed with health,  
    and wind, and rain,  
And labour. Each was like a Druid  
    rock ;

Or like a spire of land that stands  
    apart  
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about  
    with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd  
    dividing clove  
An advent to the throne : and there  
    beside,  
Half-naked as if caught at once from  
    bed  
And tumbled on the purple footcloth,  
    lay  
The lily-shining child ; and on the  
    left,  
Bow'd on her palms and folded up  
    from wrong,  
Her round white shoulder shaken  
    with her sobs,  
Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche  
    erect  
Stood up and spake, an affluent  
    orator.

" It was not thus, O Princess, in  
    old days :  
You prized my counsel, lived upon  
    my lips :  
I led you then to all the Castalies ;  
I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;  
I loved you like this kneeler, and you  
    me

Your second mother : those were  
    gracious times.  
Then came your new friend : you  
    began to change—  
I saw it and grieved—to slacken and  
    to cool ;  
Till taken with her seeming oponness  
You turn'd your warmer currents all  
    to her,  
To me you froze : this was my meed  
    for all.  
Yet I bore up in part from ancient  
    love,  
And partly that I hoped to win you  
    back,  
And partly conscious of my own  
    deserts,  
And partly that you were my civil  
    head,  
And chiefly you wore born for some-  
    thing great,

In which I might your fellow-worker  
be,  
When time should serve; and thus  
a noble scheme  
Grew up from seed we two long since  
had sown;  
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's  
gourd,  
Up in one night and due to sudden  
sun:  
We took this palace; but even from  
the first  
You stood in your own light and  
darken'd mine.  
What student came but that you  
planned her path  
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
A foreigner, and I your country-  
woman,  
I your old friend and tried, she new  
in all?  
But still her lists were swell'd and  
mine were lean:  
Yet I bore up in hope she would be  
known:  
Then came these wolves: *they* knew  
her: *they* endured,  
Long-closeted with her the yester-  
morn,  
To tell her what they were, and she  
to hear:  
And me none told: not less to an eye  
like mine,  
A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
Last night, their mask was patent,  
and my foot  
Was to you: but I thought again: I  
feard'  
To meet a cold "We thank you, we  
shall hear of it  
From Lady Psyche: "you had gone  
to her,  
She told, perforce; and winning  
easy grace,  
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd  
among us  
In our young nursery still unknown,  
the stem  
Less grain than touchwood, while my  
honest heat  
Were all miscounted as malignant  
haste  
To push my rival out of place and  
power.

But public use required she should be  
known;  
And since my oath was ta'en for  
public use,  
I broke the letter of it to keep the  
sense.  
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd  
them well,  
Saw that they kept apart, no mis-  
chief done;  
And yet this day (tho' you should hate  
me for it)  
I came to tell you; found that you  
had gone,  
Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise: now,  
I thought,  
That surely she will speak; if not,  
then I;  
Did she? These monsters blazon'd  
what they were,  
According to the coarseness of their  
kind,  
For thus I hear; and known at  
last (my work)  
And full of cowardice and guilty  
shame,  
I grant in her some sense of shame,  
she flies;  
And I remain on whom to wreak your  
rage,  
I, that have lent my life to build up  
yours,  
I that have wasted here health,  
wealth, and time,  
And talents, I—you know it—I will  
not boast:  
Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
Divorced from my experience, will be  
chaff  
For every gust of chance, and men  
will say  
We did not know the real light, but  
chased  
The wisp that flickers where no foot  
can tread."

She ceased: the Princess answer'd  
coldly "Good:  
Your oath is broken: we dismiss  
you: go.  
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the  
child)  
Our mind is changed: we take it to  
ourselves."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,  
And shot from crooked lips a hag-gard smile.  
" The plan was mine. I built the nest " she said.  
" To hatch the cuckoo. Rise ! " and stoop'd to updrag  
Melissa : she, half on her mother propt,  
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast  
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,  
A Niobean daughter, one arm out,  
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven ;  
and while  
We gazed upon her came a little stir  
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd  
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,  
A woman-post in flying raiment.  
Fear  
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd  
Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell  
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head  
Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood  
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
Regarding, while she read, till over brow  
And check and bosom brake the wrathful bloom  
As of some fire against a stormy cloud,  
When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick  
Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens :  
For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,  
Beaten with some great passion at her heart,  
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard  
In the dead hush the papers that she held  
Rustle : at once the lost lamb at her feet

Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam ;  
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire ;  
she crush'd  
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn  
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,  
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say  
" Read " and I read—two letters—one her sire's.

" Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way  
We know not your ungracious laws, which learnt,  
We, conscious of what temper you are built,  
Came all in haste to hinder wrong,  
but fell  
Into his father's hands, who has this night,  
You lying close upon his territory,  
Slipt round and in the dark invested you,  
And here he keeps me hostage for his son."

The second was my father's running thus :  
" You have our son : touch not a hair of his head :  
Render him up unscathed : give him your hand :  
Cleave to your contract : tho' indeed we hear  
You hold the woman is the better man :  
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
Would make all women kick against their Lords  
Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve  
That we this night should pluck your palace down ;  
And we will do it, unless you send us back  
Our son, on the instant, whole." So far I read ;  
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

"O not to pry and peer on your  
 reserve,  
 But led by golden wishes, and a hope  
 The child of regal compact, did I  
 break  
 Your precinct; not a scorner of your  
 sex  
 But venerator, zealous it should be  
 All that it might be: hear me, for  
 I bear,  
 Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er  
 your wrongs,  
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock  
 a life  
 Less mine than yours: my nurse  
 would tell me of you;  
 I babbled for you, as babies for the  
 moon,  
 Vague brightness; when a boy, you  
 stoop'd to me  
 From all high places, lived in all fair  
 lights,  
 Came in long breezes rapt from in-  
 most south  
 And blown to inmost north; at eve  
 and dawn  
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;  
 The leader wildswan in among the  
 stars  
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths  
 of glowworm light  
 The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida.  
 Now,  
 Because I would have reach'd you,  
 had you been  
 Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the  
 enthroned  
 Persephone in Hades, now at length,  
 Those winters of abeyance all worn  
 out,  
 A man I came to see you: but,  
 indeed,  
 Not in this frequence can I lend full  
 tongue,  
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that  
 wait  
 On you, their centre: let me say but  
 this,  
 That many a famous man and woman,  
 town  
 And landskip, have I heard of, after  
 seen  
 The dwarfs of presage: tho' when  
 known, there grew

Another kind of beauty in detail  
 Made them worth knowing; but in  
 you I found  
 My boyish dream involved and  
 dazzled down  
 And master'd, while that after-beauty  
 makes  
 Such head from act to act, from hour  
 to hour,  
 Within me, that except you slay me  
 hero,  
 According to your bitter statute-  
 book,  
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they  
 say  
 The seal does music; who desire  
 you more  
 Than growing boys their manhood;  
 dying lips,  
 With many thousand matters left to  
 do,  
 The breath of life; O more than poor  
 men wealth,  
 Than sick men health—yours, yours,  
 not mine—but half  
 Without you; with you, whole; and  
 of those halves  
 You worthiest; and howe'er you  
 block and bar  
 Your heart with system out from  
 mine, I hold  
 That it becomes no man to nurse  
 despair,  
 But in the teeth of clenched antagon-  
 isms  
 To follow up the worthiest till he  
 die:  
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized  
 Behold your father's letter."

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught,  
 and dash'd  
 Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce  
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her  
 lips,  
 As waits a river level with the dam  
 Ready to burst and flood the world  
 with foam:  
 And so she would have spoken, but  
 there rose  
 A hubbub in the court of half the  
 maids  
 Gather'd together: from the illu-  
 mined hall

Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er  
a press  
Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded  
ewes,  
And rainbow robes, and gems and  
gemlike eys,  
And gold and golden heads; they  
to and fro  
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some  
red, some pale,  
All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the  
light,  
Some crying there was an army in the  
land,  
And some that men were in the very  
walls,  
And some they cared not; till a  
clamour grew  
As of a new-world Babel, woman-  
built,  
And worse-confounded: high above  
them stood  
The placid marble Muses, looking  
peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head:  
but rising up  
Robed in the long night of her deep  
hair, so  
To the open window moved, remain-  
ing there  
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the  
waves  
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling  
eye  
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the  
light  
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd  
her arms and call'd  
Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

" What fear ye brawlers? am not  
I your Head?  
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks:  
I dare  
All these male thunderbolts: what  
is it ye fear?  
Peace! there are those to avenge us  
and they come:  
If not,—myself were like enough, O  
girls,  
To unfurl the maiden banner of our  
rights,  
And clad in iron burst the ranks of  
war,

Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
Die: yet I blame you not so much  
for fear;  
Six thousand years of fear have made  
you that  
From which I would redeem you:  
but for those  
That stir this hubbub—you and you  
—I know  
Your faces there in the crowd—to  
morrow morn  
We hold a great convention: then  
shall they  
That love their voices more than  
duty, learn  
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in  
shame to live  
No wiser than their mothers, house-  
hold stuff,  
Live chatels, mincers of each other's  
fame,  
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the  
clown,  
The drunkard's football, laughing-  
stocks of Time,  
Whose brains are in their hands and  
in their heels,  
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance,  
to thrum,  
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and  
to scour,  
For ever slaves at home and fools  
abroad."

She, ending, waved her hands:  
thenceat the crowd  
Muttering, dissolved: then with a  
smile, that look'd  
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,  
When all the glens are drown'd in  
azure gloom  
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us  
and said:  
" You have done well and like a  
gentleman,  
And like a prince: you have our  
thanks for all:  
And you look well too in your woman's  
dress:  
Well have you done and like a gentle-  
man.  
You saved our life: we owe you bitter  
thanks:

<p>Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood— Then men had said—but now—What hinders me To take such bloody vengeance on you both?— Yet since our father—Wasps in our good hive, You would-be quenchers of the light to be, Barbarians, grosser than your native bears— O would I had his sceptre for one hour! You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us— I wed with thee! I bound by pre- contract Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all the gold That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown, And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir, Your falsehood and yourself are hate- ful to us: I trample on your offers and on you: Begone: we will not look upon you more. Here, push them out at gates."</p>	<p>On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt: I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts; The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard, The jest and earnest working side by side, The cataract and the tumult and the kings Were shadows; and the long fan- tastic night With all its doings had and had not been, And all things were and were not. This went by As strangely as it came, and on my spirits Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy; Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one To whom the touch of all mischance but came As night to him that sitting on a hill Sees the midsummer, midnight, Nor- way sun Set into sunrise; then we moved away.</p>
<p>In wrath she spake. Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd Their motion: twice I sought to plead my cause, But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands, The weight of destiny: so from her face They push'd us, down the steps, and thru' the court, And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.</p>	<p>Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums, That beat to battle where he stands; Thy face across his fancy comes, And gives the battle to his hands: A moment, while the trumpets blow, He sees his brood about thy knee; The next, like fire he meets the foe, And strikes him dead for thine and thee.</p>
<p>We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came</p>	<p>So Lilia sang: we thought her half- possess'd, She struck such warbling fury thro' the words; And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime— Like one that wishes at a dance to change The music—clapt her hands and cried for war,</p>

Or some grand fight to kill and make  
an end :  
And he that next inherited the tale  
Half turning to the broken statue,  
said,  
" Sir Ralph has got your colours : if  
I prove  
Your knight, and fight your battle,  
what for me ?"  
It chanced, her empty glove upon the  
tomb  
Lay by her like a model of her hand.  
She took it and she flung it.  
" Fight " she said,  
" And make us all we would be, great  
and good."  
He knightlike in his cap instead of  
casque,  
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,  
Arranged the favour, and assumed  
the Prince.

## v

Now, scarce three paces measured  
from the mound,  
We stumbled on a stationary voice,  
And " Stand, who goes ? " " Two  
from the palace " I.  
" The second two : they wait, " he  
said, " pass on ;  
His Highness wakes : " and one, that  
clash'd in arms,  
By glimmering lanes and walls of  
canvas, led  
Threading the soldier-city, till we  
heard  
The drowsy folds of our great ensign  
shake  
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial  
tent  
Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light  
Dazed me half-blind : I stood and  
seem'd to hear,  
As in a poplar grove when a light wind  
wakes  
A lisping of the innumerable leaf and  
dies,  
Each hissing in his neighbour's ear ;  
and then

A strangled titter, out of which there  
brake  
On all sides, clamouring etiquette to  
death,  
Unmeasured mirth ; while now the  
two old kings  
Began to wag their baldness up and  
down,  
The fresh young captains flash'd their  
glittering teeth,  
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved  
and blew,  
And slain with laughter roll'd the  
gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek  
wet with tears,  
Panted from weary sides " King, you  
are free !  
We did but keep you surety for our  
son,  
If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin,  
thou,  
That tends her bristled grunters in  
the sludge : "  
For I was drench'd with ooze, and  
torn with briers,  
More crumpled than a poppy from  
the sheath,  
And all one rag, disprinced from head  
to heel,  
Then some one sent beneath his  
vaulted palm  
A whisper'd jest to some one near  
him " Look,  
He has been among his shadows."  
" Satan take  
The old women and their shadows !  
( thus the King  
Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight  
with men.  
Go : Cyril told us all."  
As boys that slink  
From ferule and the trespass-chiding  
eye,  
Away we stole, and transient in a  
trice  
From what was left of faded woman-  
slough  
To sheathing splendours and the  
golden scale  
Of harness, issued in the sun, that now  
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the  
Earth,

And hit the Northern hills. Here  
 Cyril met us,  
 A little shy at first, but by and  
 by  
 We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd  
 and given  
 For stroke and song, resoldered peace,  
 whercon  
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled  
 away  
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the  
 night  
 Had come on Psyche weeping : " then  
 we fell  
 Into your father's hand, and there  
 she lies,  
 But will not speak, nor stir."  
 He show'd a tent  
 A stone-shot off : we enter'd in, and  
 there  
 Among piled arms and rough accou-  
 trements,  
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's  
 cloak,  
 Like some sweet sculpture draped  
 from head to foot,  
 And push'd by rude hands from its  
 pedestal,  
 All her fair length upon the ground  
 she lay :  
 And at her head a follower of the  
 camp,  
 A charred and wrinkled piece of  
 womanhood,  
 Sat watching like a watcher by the  
 dead.

Then Florian knelt and " Come "  
 he whisper'd to her,  
 " Lift up your head, sweet sister :  
 lie not thus.  
 What have you done but right ? you  
 could not slay  
 Me, nor your prince : look up : be  
 comforted :  
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one  
 ought,  
 When fall'n in darker ways." And  
 likewise I :  
 " Be comforted : have I not lost her  
 too,  
 In whose least act abides the name-  
 less charm

That none has else for me ? " She  
 heard, she moved,  
 She moan'd, a folded voice ; and up  
 she sat,  
 And raised the cloak from brows as  
 pale and smooth  
 As those that mourn half-shrouded  
 over death  
 In deathless marble. " Her " she said  
 " my friend—  
 Parted from her—betrayed her cause  
 and mine—  
 Where shall I breathe ? why kept ye  
 not your faith ?  
 O base and bad ! what comfort ? none  
 for me ! "  
 To whom remorseful Cyril " Yet I  
 pray  
 Take comfort : live, dear lady, for  
 your child ! "  
 At which she lifted up her voice and  
 cried.

" Ah me, my babe, my blossom,  
 ah my child,  
 My one sweet child, whom I shall see  
 no more !  
 For now will cruel Ida keep her back ;  
 And either she will die from want of  
 care,  
 Or sicken with ill-usage, when they  
 say  
 The child is hers—for every little  
 fault,  
 The child is hers ; and they will beat  
 my girl  
 Remembering her mother : O my  
 flower !  
 Or they will take her, they will make  
 her hard,  
 And she will pass me by in after-life  
 With some cold reverence worse than  
 were she dead,  
 Ill mother that I was to leave her  
 there,  
 To lag behind, scared by the cry they  
 made,  
 The horror of the shame among them  
 all :  
 But I will go and sit beside the doors,  
 And make a wild petition night and  
 day,  
 Until they hate to hear me like a wind

Wailing for ever, till they open to me,  
 And lay my little blossom at my feet,  
 My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one child :  
 And I will take her up and go my way,  
 And satisfy my soul with kissing her :  
 Ah ! what might that man not deserve of me,  
 Who gave me back my child ? " " Be comforted "  
 Said Cyril " you shall have it : " but again  
 She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so  
 Like tender things that being caught  
 feign death,  
 Spoke not, nor stirr'd.  
     By this a murmur ran  
 Thro' all the camp and inward raced the scouts  
 With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
 We left her by the woman, and without  
 Found the gray kings at parle : and " Look you " cried  
 My father " that our compact be fulfil'd :  
 You have spoilt this child ; she laughs at you and man :  
 She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him :  
 But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire ;  
 She yields, or war."  
     Then Gama turn'd to me : " We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time  
 With our strange girl : and yet they say that still  
 You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large :  
 How say you, war or not ? "  
     " Not war, if possible, O king," I said, " lest from the abuse of war,  
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,  
 The smouldering homestead, and the household flower

Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—  
 A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her  
 Three times a monster : now she lightens scorn  
 At him that mars her plan, but then would hate  
 (And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,  
 And every face she look'd on justify it)  
 The general foe. More soluble is this knot,  
 By gentleness than war. I want her love.  
 What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd  
 Your cities into shards with catapults,  
 She would not love ;—or brought her chain'd, a slave,  
 The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,  
 Not ever would she love ; but brooding turn  
 The book of scorn, till all my little chance  
 Were caught within the record of her wrongs,  
 And crush'd to death : and rather, Sire, than this  
 I would the old God of war himself were dead,  
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,  
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,  
 Not to be molten out."

And roughly spake

My father, " Tut, you know them not, the girls,  
 Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
 That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir !  
 Man is the hunter ; woman is his game :  
 The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,  
 We hunt them for the beauty of their skins ;

They love us for it, and we ride them down.  
 Wheedling and siding with them ! Out ! for shame !  
 Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them  
 As he that does the thing they dare not do.  
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes  
 With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in  
 Among the women, snares them by the score  
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd with death  
 He reddens what he kisses : thus I won  
 Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,  
 Worth winning ; but this firebrand—gentleness  
 To such as her ! if Cyril spake her true,  
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
 Were wisdom to it."

" Yea but Sire," I cried,  
 " Wild natures need wise curbs.  
 The soldier ? No : What dares not Ida do that she should prize  
 The soldier ? I beheld her, when she rose  
 The yesternight, and storming in extremes  
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down  
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,  
 No, not the soldier's : yet I hold her, king,  
 True woman : but you clash them all in one,  
 That have as many differences as we.  
 The violet varies from the lily as far  
 As oak from elm : one loves the soldier, one  
 The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,

And some unworthily ; their sinless faith,  
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty, Glorifying clown and satyr ; whence they need  
 More breadth of culture : is not Ida right ?  
 They worth it ? truer to the law within ?  
 Severer in the logic of a life ? Twice as magnetic to sweet influences Of earth and heaven ? and she of whom you speak,  
 My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
 Creation minted in the golden moods Of sovereign artists ; not a thought, a touch,  
 But pure as lines of green that streak the white  
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves ; I say,  
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man, Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,  
 But whole and one : and take them all-in-all,  
 Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,  
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as right  
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs  
 As dues of Nature. To our point : not war : Lest I lose all."

" Nay, nay, you spake but sense," Said Gama. " We remember love ourself . In our sweet youth ; we did not rate him then This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.  
 You talk almost like Ida : *she* can't talk ; And there is something in it as you say : But you talk kindlier : we esteem you for it.— He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince, I would he had our daughter : for the rest,

Our own detention, why, the causes  
weigh'd,  
Fatherly fears—you used us courte-  
ously—  
We would do much to gratify your  
Prince—  
We pardon it; and for your ingress  
here  
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair  
land,  
You did but come as goblins in the  
night,  
Nor in the furrow broke the plough-  
man's head,  
Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the  
milking-maid,  
Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of  
cream:  
But let your Prince (our royal word  
upon it,  
He comes back safe) ride with us to  
our lines,  
And speak with Arac: Arac's word  
is thrice  
As ours with Ida: something may  
be done—  
I know not what—and ours shall see  
us friends.  
You, likewise, our late guests, if so  
you will,  
Follow us: who knows? we four  
may build some plan  
Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reach'd  
White hands of farewell to my sire,  
who growl'd  
An answer which, half-muffled in his  
beard,  
Let so much out as gave us leave to  
go.

Then rode we with the old king  
across the lawns  
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings  
of Spring  
In every bole, a song on every spray  
Of birds that piped their Valentines,  
and woke  
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
In the old king's ears, who promised  
help, and oozed  
All o'er with honey'd answer as we  
rode;

And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy  
dews  
Gather'd by night and peace, with  
each light air  
On our mail'd heads: but other  
thoughts than Peace  
Burnt in us, when we saw the em-  
battled squares,  
And squadrons of the Prince, tramp-  
ling the flowers  
With clamour: for among them rose  
a cry  
As if to greet the king; they made a  
halt;  
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their  
arms; the drum  
Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the  
martial fifes;  
And in the blast and bray of the long  
horn  
And serpent-throated bugle, undu-  
lated  
The banner: anon to meet us lightly  
pranced  
Three captains out; nor ever had I  
seen  
Such thews of men: the midmost and  
the highest  
Was Arac: all about his motion clung  
The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
Of the East, that play'd upon them,  
made them glance  
Like those three stars of the airy  
Giant's zone,  
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty  
dark;  
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,  
And bickers into red and emerald  
shone  
Their morions, wash'd with morning,  
as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first  
I heard  
War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of  
force,  
Whose home is in the sinews of a  
man,  
Stir in me as to strike: then took the  
king  
His three broad sons; with now a  
wandering hand  
And now a pointed finger, told them  
all:

A common light of smiles at our disguise  
 Broke from their lips, and, ere the  
 Windy jest  
 Had labour'd down within his ample  
 Lungs,  
 The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
 Thrice in the saddle, then burst out  
 In words.

"Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and  
 He himself  
 Your captive, yet my father wills not  
 War:  
 And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I,  
 War or no?  
 But then this question of your troth  
 Remains:  
 And there's a downright honest mean-  
 Ing in her;  
 She flies too high, she flies too high!  
 And yet  
 She ask'd but space and fairplay for  
 Her scheme;  
 She prest and prest it on me—I my-  
 self,  
 What know I of these things? but,  
 Life and soul!  
 I thought her half-right talking of her  
 Wrongs;  
 I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what  
 Of that?  
 I take her for the flower of woman-  
 kind,  
 And so I often told her, right or  
 wrong,  
 And, Prince, she can be sweet to  
 Those she loves,  
 And, right or wrong, I care not: this  
 Is all,  
 I stand upon her side: she made me  
 Swear it—  
 'sdeath—and with solemn rites by  
 Candle-light—  
 Swear by St. something—I forgot  
 Her name—  
 Her that talked down the fifty wisest  
 Men;  
 She was a princess too; and so I  
 Swore.  
 Come, this is all; she will not: waive  
 Your claim:  
 If not, the foughтен field, what else,  
 At once

Decides it, 'sdeath! against my  
 Father's will."

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up  
 My precontract, and loth by brainless  
 War  
 To cleave the rift of difference deeper  
 Yet;  
 Till one of those two brothers, half  
 aside  
 And fingering at the hair about his  
 Lip,  
 To prick us on to combat "Like to  
 like!"  
 The woman's garment hid the  
 Woman's heart."  
 A taunt that clenched his purpose like  
 A blow!  
 For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-  
 scoff,  
 And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon  
 The point  
 Where idle boys are cowards to their  
 Shame,  
 "Decide it here: why not? we are  
 Three to three."

Then spake the third "But three  
 To three? no more?  
 No more, and in our noble sister's  
 Cause?  
 More, more, for honour: every cap-  
 tain waits  
 Hungry for honour, angry for his  
 King.  
 More, more, some fifty on a side, that  
 Each  
 May breathe himself, and quick! by  
 Overthrow  
 Of these or those, the question settled  
 Die."

"Yea" answer'd I "for this wild  
 Wreath of air,  
 This flake of rainbow flying on the  
 Highest  
 Foam of men's deeds—this honour,  
 If ye will.  
 It needs must be for honour if at all:  
 Since, what decision? if we fail, we  
 fail,  
 And if we win, we fail: she would not  
 keep

Her compact." " 'Sdeath ! but we  
will send to her,"  
Said Arac, " worthy reasons why she  
should  
Bide by this issue : let our missive  
thro',  
And you shall have her answer by the  
word."

" Boys ! " shrieked the old king,  
but vainlier than a hen  
To her false daughters in the pool ;  
for none  
Regarded ; neither seem'd there  
more to say :  
Back rode we to my father's camp,  
and found  
He thrice had sent a herald to the  
gates,  
To learn if Ida yet would cede our  
claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells  
With her own people's life : three  
times he went :  
The first, he blew and blew, but none  
appear'd :  
He batter'd at the doors : none  
came : the next,  
An awful voice within had warn'd  
him thence :  
The third, and those eight daughters  
of the plough  
Came sallying thro' the gates, and  
caught his hair,  
And so belabour'd him on rib and  
cheek  
They made him wild : not less one  
glance he caught  
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd  
there  
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose,  
firm  
Tho' compass'd by two armies and  
the noise  
Of arms ; and standing like a stately  
Pine  
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
When storm is on the heights, and  
right and left  
Suck'd from the dark heart of the  
long hills roll  
The torrents, dash'd to the vale : and  
yet her will  
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I  
was pledged  
To fight in tourney for my bride, he  
clash'd  
His iron palms together with a cry ;  
Himself would tilt it out among the  
lads :  
But overborne by all his bearded  
lords  
With reasons drawn from age and  
state, perforce  
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce  
demur :  
And many a bold knight started up  
in heat,  
And swore to combat for my claim  
till death.

All on this side the palace ran the  
field  
Flat to the garden-wall : and like-  
wise here,  
Above the garden's glowing blossom-  
belts,  
A column'd entry shone and marble  
stairs,  
And great bronze valves, emboss'd  
with Tomyris  
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
But now fast barr'd : so here upon  
the flat  
All that long morn the lists were  
hammer'd up,  
And all that morn the heralds to and  
fro,  
With message and defiance, went and  
came ;  
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
But shaken here and there, and  
rolling words  
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

" O brother, you have known the  
pangs we felt,  
What heats of indignation when we  
heard  
Of those that iron-cramp'd their  
women's feet ;  
Of lands in which at the altar the  
poor bride  
Gives her harsh groom for bridal gift  
a scourge ;  
Of living hearts that crack within the  
fire

Where shoulder their dead despots ; and of those,—  
 Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling  
 Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops  
 The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart  
 Made for all noble motion : and I saw  
 That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
 With smoother men : the old leaven leaven'd all :  
 Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,  
 No woman named : therefore I set my face  
 Against all men, and lived but for mine own.  
 Far off from men I built a fold for them :  
 I stored it full of rich memorial : I fenced it round with gallant institutes,  
 And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,  
 And prosper'd ; till a rout of saucy boys  
 Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace.  
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what  
 Of insolence and love, some pretext held  
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
 Seal'd not the bond—the striplings !—for their sport !—  
 Itamed my leopards : shall I not tame these ?  
 Or you ? or I ? for since you think me touch'd  
 In honour—what, I would not aught of false—  
 Is not our cause pure ? and whereas I know  
 Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood  
 You draw from, fight ; you failing, I abide  
 What end soever : fail you will not.  
 Still  
 Take not his life : he risk'd it for my own ;

His mother lives : yet whatsoe'er you do,  
 Fight and fight well ; strike and strike home. O dear  
 Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you  
 The sole men to be mingled with our cause,  
 The sole men we shall prize in the after-time,  
 Your very armour hallow'd, and your statues  
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd aside,  
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
 And mould a generation strong to move  
 With claim on claim from right to right, till she  
 Whose name is yoked with chidren's, know herself ;  
 And Knowledge in our own land make her free,  
 And, ever following those two crowned twins,  
 Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain  
 Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
 Between the Northern and the Southern morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest.  
 " See that there be no traitors in your camp :  
 We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust  
 Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-plague of men !  
 Almost our maids were better at their homes,  
 Than thus man-girdled here : indeed I think  
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
 Of one unworthy mother ; which she left :  
 She shall not have it back : the child shall grow  
 To prize the authentic mother of her mind.  
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
 This morning : there the tender orphan hands

Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from thence  
The wrath I nursed against the world : " farewell."

I ceased ; he said : " Stubborn, but she may sit  
Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms  
And breed up warriors ! See now, tho' yourself  
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
That swallow common sense, the spindling king,  
This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.  
When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,  
And topples down the scales ; but this is fixt  
As are the roots of earth and base of all ;  
Man for the field and woman for the hearth :  
Man for the sword and for the needle she :  
Man with the head and woman with the heart :  
Man to command and woman to obey ;  
All else confusion. ' Look you ! the gray mare  
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills  
From tile to scullery, and her small goodman  
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of Hell  
Mix with his hearth : but you—she's yet a colt—  
Take, break her : strongly groom'd and straitly curb'd  
She might not rank with those detestable  
That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl  
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.  
They say she's comely ; there's the fairer chance :  
I like her none the less for rating at her !  
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,

But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace  
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,  
The bearing and the training of a child  
Is woman's wisdom." Thus the hard old king : I took my leave, for it was nearly noon : I pore upon her letter which I held,  
And on the little clause " take not his life :" I mused on that wild morning in the woods,  
And on the " Follow, follow, thou shalt win :" I thought on all the wrathful king had said,  
And how the strange betrothment was to end : Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's curse  
That one should fight with shadows and should fall ; And like a flash the weird affection came : King, camp and college turn'd to hollow shows ; I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,  
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,  
To dream myself the shadow of a dream : And ere I wok'd it was the point of noon,  
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed  
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared  
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land  
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more  
The trumpet, and again : at which the storm  
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears  
And riders front to front, until they closed

In conflict with the crash of shivering points,  
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream,  
I dream'd  
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,  
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.  
Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but kept their seats:  
Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew:  
Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down  
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down,  
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,  
The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere  
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,  
And all the plain,—brand, mace, and shaft, and shield—  
Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd  
With hammers; till I thought, can this be he  
From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,  
The mother makes us most—and in my dream  
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,  
And highest, among the statues, statuelike,  
Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,  
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
A single band of gold about her hair,  
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven: but she  
No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—  
Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me fight,  
Yea, let her see me fall! with that I drove

Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,  
And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my dream  
All that I would. But that large-moulded man,  
His visago all agrin as at a wake,  
Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back  
With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came  
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,  
And shadowing down the champain till it strikes  
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,  
And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth  
Reels, and the herdsmen cry: for everything  
Gave way before him: only Florian, he  
That loved me closer than his own right eye,  
Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:  
And Cyril seing it, push'd against the Prince,  
With Psyche's colour round his helmet, tough,  
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;  
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote  
And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt my veins  
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,  
And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,  
Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced;  
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth  
Flow'd from me; darkness closed me; and I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead:  
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:  
All her maidens, watching, said,  
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
Truest friend and noblest foe ;  
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
Lightly to the warrior stept,  
Took the face-cloth from the face ;  
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
Set his child upon her knee—  
Like summer tempest came her tears—  
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

## VI

My dream had never died or lived again.  
As in some mystic middle state I lay :  
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard :  
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all  
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,  
That all things grew more tragic and more strange ;  
That when our side was vanquish'd and my cause  
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,  
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran  
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque  
And grovell'd on my body, and after him  
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
With Psyche's babe in arm : there on the roofs  
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : the seed,  
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came ;  
The leaves were wet with women's tears : they heard  
A noise of songs they would not understand :  
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
And would have strown it, and are fall'n themselves.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came,  
The woodmen with their axes : to the tree !  
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,  
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

" Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they struck ;  
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew  
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :  
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

" Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power ; and roll'd  
With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

" And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary  
Is violate, our laws broken : fear we not  
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms  
Champion'd our cause and won it with a day

Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual  
feast,  
When dames and heroines of the  
golden year  
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of  
Spring.  
To rain an April of ovation round  
Their statues, borne aloft, the three :  
but come,  
We will be liberal, since our rights are  
won.  
Let them not lie in the tents with  
coarse mankind,  
Ill nurses ; but descend, and proffer  
these  
The brethren of our blood and cause,  
that there  
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender  
ministries  
Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet  
in her arms,  
Descending, burst the great bronze  
valves, and led  
A hundred maids in train across the  
Park.  
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed,  
on they came,  
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest :  
by them went  
The enamour'd air sighing, and on  
their curls  
From the high tree the blossom  
waivering fell,  
And over them the tremulous isles of  
light  
Slid, they moving under shade : but  
Blanche  
At distance follow'd : so they came :  
anon  
Thro' open field into the lists they  
wound  
Timorously ; and as the leader of the  
herd  
That holds a stately fretwork to the  
Sun,  
And follow'd up by a hundred airy  
does,  
Steps with a tender foot, light as on  
air,  
The lovely, lordly creature floated on  
To where her wounded brethren lay ;  
there stay'd ;

Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,  
—and prest  
Their hands, and call'd them dear  
deliverers,  
And happy warriors, and immortal  
names,  
And said " You shall not lie in the  
tents but here,  
And nursed by those for whom you  
fought, and served  
With female hands and hospitality."

Then, whether moved by this, or  
was it chance,  
She past my way. Up started from  
my side  
The old lion, glaring with his whelp-  
less eye,  
Silent ; but when she saw me lying  
stark,  
Disheild and mute, and motion-  
lessly pale,  
Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and  
when she saw  
The haggard father's face and rever-  
end beard  
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the  
blood  
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch  
of pain  
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her  
forehead past  
A shadow, and her hue changed, and  
she said :  
" He saved my life : my brother slew  
him for it."  
No more : at which the king in bitter  
scorn  
Drew from my neck the painting and  
the tress  
And held them up : she saw them,  
and a day  
Rose from the distance on her  
memory,  
When the good Queen, her mother,  
shore the tress  
With kisses, ere the days of Lady  
Blanche :  
And then once more she look'd at my  
pale face :  
Till understanding all the foolish work  
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
Her iron will was br'oken in her mind ;

Her noble heart was molten in her breast;  
She bow'd, she set the child on the earth ; she laid  
A feeling finger on my brows, and presently  
" O Sire," she said, " he lives : he is not dead :  
O let me have him with my brethren here  
In our own palace : we will tend on him  
Like one of these ; if so, by any means,  
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make  
Our progress falter to the woman's goal."

She said : but at the happy word  
" he lives "  
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.  
So those two foes above my fallen life,  
With brow to brow like night and evening mixt  
Their dark and grey, while Psyche ever stole  
A little nearer, till the babe that by us,  
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,  
Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,  
Uncared for, spied its mother and began  
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance  
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms  
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
Brook'd not, but clamouring out  
" Mine—mine—not yours,  
It is not yours, but mine : give me the child "  
Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the cry :  
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,  
And turn'd each face her way : wan was her cheek

With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,  
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,  
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half  
The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
The laces toward her babe ; but she nor cared  
Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,  
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood  
Erect and silent, striking with her glance  
The mother, me, the child ; but he that lay  
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
Trail'd himself up on one knee : then he drew  
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd  
At the arm'd man sideways, pitying, as it seem'd,  
Or self-involved ; but when she learnt his face,  
Remem'ring his ill-omen'd song, arose  
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew  
Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said :

" O fair and strong and terrible !  
Lioness  
That with your long locks play the Lion's mane !  
But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible  
And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,  
We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.  
What would you more ? give her the child ! remain  
Orb'd in your isolation : he is dead,  
Or all as dead : henceforth we let you be :  
Win you the hearts of women ; and beware

<p>Lest, where you seek the common love of these, The common hate with the revolving wheel Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire, And tread you out for ever: but howsoe'er Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms To hold your own, deny not her's to her, Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved The breast that fed or arm that dandled you, Or own one part of sense not flint to prayer, Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it, Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours, Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill, Give me it: I will give it her."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">He said:</p> <p>At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd Dry flame, she listening; after sank and sank And, into mournful twilight mellow- ing, dwelt Full on the child; she took it: "Pretty bud!" Lily of the vale! half open'd bell of the woods! Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world Of traitorous friend and broken system made No purple in the distance, mys- tery, Pledge of a love not to be mine, fare- well; These men are hard upon us as of old, We two must part: and yet how fain was I</p>	<p>To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think I might be something to thee, when I felt Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast In the dead prime: but may thy mother prove As true to thee as false, false, false to me! And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it Gentle as freedom"—here she kiss'd it: then— " All good go with thee I take it Sir " and so Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands, Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks; Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot, And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough, And in her hunger mouth'd and mum- bled it, And hid her bosom with it; after that Put on more calm and added suppli- antly;</p> <p>" We two were friends: I go to mine own land For ever: find some other: as for me I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet speak to me, Say one soft word and let me part forgiven."</p> <p>But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child. Then Arac. "Ida—'sdeath! you blame the man; You wrong yourselves—the woman is so hard Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me! I am your warrior: I and mine have fought Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she weeps:</p>
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'Sdeath ! I would sooner fight thrice  
o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the  
ground,  
And reddening in the furrows of his  
chin,  
And moved beyond his custom, Gama  
said :

" I've heard that there is iron in the  
blood,  
And I believe it. Not one word ? not  
one ?  
Whence drew you this steel temper ?  
not from me,  
Not from your mother now a saint  
with saints.  
She said you had a heart—I heard her  
say it—  
' Our Ida has a heart '—just ere she  
died—

' But see that some one with autho-  
rity  
Be near her still ' and I—I sought for  
one—

All people said she had authority—  
The Lady Blanche : much profit !  
Not one word ;

No ! tho' your father sues : see how  
you stand

Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good  
knights main'd,  
I trust that there is no one hurt to  
death,

For your wild whim : and was it then  
for this,

Was it for this we gave our palace up,  
Where we withdrew from summer  
heats and state,

And had our wine and chess beneath  
the plances,

And many a pleasant hour with her  
that's gone,

Ere you were born to vex us ? Is it  
kind ?

Speak to her I say : is this not she of  
whom,

When first she came, all flush'd you  
said to me

Now had you got a friend of your own  
age,

Now could you share your thought ;  
now should men see

Two women faster wolded in one love  
Than pairs of wedlock ; she you  
walk'd with, she  
You talk'd with, whole nights long,  
up in the tower,  
Of sine and arc, spheroid, and azimuth,  
And right ascension, Heaven knows  
what ; and now  
A word, but one, one little kindly word,  
Not one to spare her : out upon you,  
flint !

You love nor her, nor me, nor any :  
nay,  
You shame your mother's judgment  
too. Not one ?  
You will not ? well—no heart have  
you, or such  
As fancies like the vermin in a nut  
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness."  
So said the small king moved beyond  
his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd  
of her force  
By many a varying influence and so  
long.  
Down thro' her limbs a drooping  
languor wept :  
Her head a little bent ; and on her  
mouth  
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded  
moon  
In a still water : then brake out my  
sire  
Lifting his grim head from my  
wounds. " O you,  
Woman, whom we thought woman  
even now,  
And were half fool'd to let you tend  
our son,  
Because he might have wish'd it—  
but we see  
The accomplice of your madness un-  
forgiven,  
And think that you might mix his  
draught with death,  
When your skies change again : the  
rougher hand  
Is safer : on to the tents : take up  
the Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was  
prick'd to attend

A tempest, thro' the cloud that  
dimm'd her broke  
A genial warmth and light once more,  
and shone  
Thro' glittering drops on her sad  
friend.

" Come hither,  
O Psyche," she cried out, " embrace  
me, come,  
Quick while I melt; make reconcile-  
ment sure  
With one that cannot keep her mind  
an hour :  
Come to the hollow heart they slander  
so !  
Kiss and be friends, like children  
being chid !  
*I seem no more : I want forgiveness*  
too :  
I should have had to do with none  
but maids,  
That have no links with men. Ah  
false but dear,  
Dear traitor, too much loved, why ?  
—why ?—Yet see,  
Before these kings we embrace you  
yet once more  
With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
And trust, not love, you less.  
And now, O Sire,  
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait  
upon him,  
Like mine own brother. For my  
debt to him,  
This nightmare weight of gratitude,  
I know it ;  
Taunt me no more : yourself and  
yours shall have  
Free audit ; we will scatter all our  
maids  
Till happier times each to her proper  
hearth :  
What use to keep them here now ?  
grant my prayer.  
Help, father, brother, help ; speak  
to the king :  
Thaw this male nature to some touch  
of that  
Which kills me with myself, and drags  
me down  
From my fixt height to mob me up  
with all  
The soft and milky rabble of woman-  
kind,

Poor weakling ev'n as they are."  
Passionate tears  
Follow'd : the king replied not :  
Cyril said :  
" Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—  
ask for him  
Of your great head—for he is wounded  
too—  
That you may tend upon him with  
the prince."  
" Ay so," said Ida with a bitter  
smile,  
" Our laws are broken : let him enter  
too."  
Then Violet, she that sang the mourn-  
ful song,  
And had a cousin tumbled on the  
plain,  
Petition'd too for him. " Ay so,"  
she said,  
" I stagger in the stream : I cannot  
keep  
My heart an eddy from the brawling  
hour :  
We break our laws with ease, but let  
it be."  
" Ay so ?" said Blanche : " Amazed  
am I to hear  
Your Highness : but your Highness  
breaks with ease  
The law your Highness did not make :  
'twas I.  
I had been wedded wife, I knew man-  
kind,  
And block'd them out ; but these  
men came to woo  
Your Highness—verily I think to  
win."

So she, and turn'd askance a  
wintry eye :  
But Ida with a voice, that like a  
bell  
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trem-  
bling tower,  
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and  
scorn.

" Fling our doors wide ! all, all, not  
one, but all,  
Not only he, but by my mother's  
soul,  
Whatever man lies wounded, friend  
or foe,

Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit, Till the storm die ! but had you stood by us, The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too, But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes. We brook no further insult but are gone."	When armour clash'd or jingled, while the day, Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot A flying splendour out of brass and steel, That o'er the statues leapt from head to head, Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm, Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame. And now and then an echo started up, And shuddering fled from room to room, and died Of fright in far apartments.
She turn'd ; the very nape of her white neck Was rosed with indignation : but the Prince Her brother came ; the king her father charm'd Her wounded soul with words : nor did mine own Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.	Then the voice Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance : And me they bore up the broad stairs, and thro' The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due To languid limbs and sickness ; left me in it ; And others otherwhere they laid ; and all That afternoon a sound arose of hoof And chariot, many a maiden passing home Till happier times ; but some were lost of those Held sagest, and the great lords out and in, From those two hosts that lay beside the walls, Walk'd at their will, and everything was changed.
Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare Straight to the doors : to them the doors gave way Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shrick'd The virgin marble under iron heels : And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there Rested : but great the crush was, and each base, To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd In silken fluctuation and the swarm Of female whisperers : at the further end Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats Close by her, like supporters on a shield, Bow-back'd with fear : but in the centre stood The common men with rolling eyes ; amazed They glared upon the women, and aghast The women stared at these, all silent, save	Ask me no more : the moon may draw the sea ; The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape, With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ; But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee ? Ask me no more. Ask me no more : what answer should I give ? I love not hollow cheek or faded eye : Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die !

Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee  
live ;  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are  
seal'd ;  
I strove against the stream and all  
in vain :  
Let the great river take me to the  
main :  
No more, dear love, for at a touch I  
yield ;  
Ask me no more.

## VII

So was their sanctuary violated,  
So their fair college turn'd to hos-  
pital ;  
At first with all confusion : by and  
bye  
Sweet order lived again with other  
laws :  
A kindlier influence reign'd ; and  
everywhere  
Low voices with the ministering hand  
Hung round the sick : the maidens  
came, they talk'd,  
They sang, they read : till she not  
fair, began  
To gather light, and she that was,  
became  
Her former beauty treble ; and to  
and fro  
With books, with flowers, with Angel  
offices,  
Like creatures native unto gracious  
act,  
And in their own clear element, they  
moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent  
with shame,  
Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke ;  
but oft  
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone  
for hours  
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of  
men  
Darkening her female field : void was  
her use ;  
And she as one that climbs a peak  
to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great  
black cloud

Drag inward from the deeps, a wall  
of night,  
Blot out the slope of sea from verge  
to shore,  
And suck the blinding splendour from  
the sand,  
And quenching lake by lake and tarn  
by tarn  
Expunge the world : so fared she  
gazing there ;  
So blacken'd all her world in secret,  
blank  
And waste it seem'd and vain ; till  
down she came,  
And found fair peace once more among  
the sick.

And twilight dawn'd ; and morn  
by morn the lark  
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering  
gyres, but I  
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life :  
And twilight gloom'd ; and broader-  
grown the bowers  
Drew the great night into themselves,  
and Heaven,  
Star after star, arose and fell ; but I,  
Deeper than those weird doubts could  
reach me, lay  
Quite sunder'd from the moving  
Universe,  
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor  
the hand  
That nursed me, more than infants  
in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian : with  
her oft,  
Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone,  
but left  
Her child among us, willing she  
should keep  
Court-favour : here and there the  
small bright head,  
A light of healing, glanced about the  
couch,  
Or thro' the parted silks the tender  
face  
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded  
man  
With blush and smile, a medicine in  
themselves  
To wile the length from languorous  
hours, and draw

The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it strange that soon  
He rose up whole, and those fair charities  
Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd that hearts  
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,  
Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake  
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down,  
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd  
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had sworn  
That after that dark night among the fields,  
She needs must wed him for her own good name ;  
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored ;  
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd  
To incense the Head once more ; till on a day  
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind  
Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she hung  
A moment, and she heard, at which her face  
A little flush'd, and she past on ; but each  
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved  
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls  
Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.  
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,  
Nor did mine own now reconciled ; nor yet  
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole ;  
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat :

Then came a change : for sometimes I would catch  
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek  
" You are not Ida ; " clasp it once again,  
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,  
And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
And call her hard and cold which seem'd a truth :  
And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,  
And often she believed that I should die :  
Till out of long frustration of her care,  
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,  
And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks  
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or call'd  
On flying Time from all their silver tongues—  
And out of memories of her kindlier days,  
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,  
And at the happy lovers heart in heart—  
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,  
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,  
And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek—  
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,  
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,  
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears  
By some cold morning glacier ; frail at first  
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
But such as gather'd colour day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death  
For weakness : it was evening : silent light

Slept on the painted walls, wherein  
were wrought  
Two grand designs; for on one side  
arose  
The women up in wild revolt, and  
storm'd  
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes,  
they cramm'd  
The forum, and half-crush'd among  
the rest  
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the  
other side  
Hortensia spoke against the tax;  
behind,  
A train of dames: by axe and eagle  
sat,  
With all their foreheads drawn in  
Roman scowls,  
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in  
their veins,  
The fierce triumvirs; and before  
them paused  
Hortensia, pleading: angry was her  
face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where  
I was:  
They did but look like hollow shows;  
nor more  
Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat:  
the dew  
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her  
shape  
And rounder seem'd: I moved: I  
sigh'd: a touch  
Came round my wrist, and tears upon  
my hand:  
Then all for languor and self-pity ran  
Mine down my face, and with what  
life I had,  
And like a flower that cannot all  
unfold,  
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the  
sun,  
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I  
on her  
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd  
whisperingly:

“ If you be, what I think you, some  
sweet dream,  
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:  
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,

I ask you nothing: only, if a dream.  
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die  
to-night.  
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere  
I die.”

I could no more, but lay like one  
in trance,  
That hears his burial talk'd of by his  
friends,  
And cannot speak, nor move, nor  
make one sign,  
But lies and dreads his doom. She  
turn'd; she paused;  
She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt  
a cry;  
Leapt fiery Passion from the brink  
of death;  
And I believed that in the living world  
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;  
Till back I fell, and from mine arms  
she rose  
Glowing all over noble shame; and  
all  
Her falser self slipt from her like a  
robe,  
And left her woman, lovelier in her  
mood  
Than in her mould that other, when  
she came  
From barren deeps to conquer all  
with love;  
And down the streaming crystal  
dropt; and she  
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
Naked, a double light in air and wave,  
To meet her Graces, where they  
deck'd her out  
For worship without end; nor end  
of mine,  
Stateliest, for thee! but mute she  
glided forth,  
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank  
and slept,  
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a  
happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she,  
near me, held  
A volume of the Poets of her land:  
There to herself, all in low tones, she  
read.

“Now sleeps the crimson petal,  
now the white;  
Nor waves the cypress in the palace  
walk;  
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry  
font:  
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou  
with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock  
like a ghost,  
And like a ghost she glimmers on to  
me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the  
stars,  
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on,  
and leaves  
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in  
me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness  
up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake:  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and  
slip  
Into my bosom and be lost in me.”

I heard her turn the page; she  
found a small  
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low,  
she read:

“Come down, O maid, from yonder  
mountain height:  
What pleasure lives in height (the  
shepherd sang)  
In height and cold, the splendour of  
the hills?  
But cease to move so near the  
Heavens, and cease  
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted  
Pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire:  
And come, for Love is of the valley,  
come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou  
down  
And find him; by the happy thresh-  
old, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the  
maize,

Or red with spirited purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to  
walk  
With Death and Morning on the silver  
horns,  
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white  
ravine.  
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of  
ice,  
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven  
falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:  
But follow; let the torrent dance  
thee down  
To find him in the valley; let the  
wild  
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and  
leave  
The monstrous ledges there to slope,  
and spill  
Their thousand wreaths of dangling  
water-smoke,  
That like a broken purpose waste in  
air:  
So waste not thou; but come; for  
all the vales  
Await thee; azure pillars of the  
hearth  
Arise to thee; the children call, and  
I  
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every  
sound,  
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is  
sweet;  
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro'  
the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial  
elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable  
bees.”

So she low-toned; while with  
shut eyes I lay  
Listening; then look'd. Pale was  
the perfect face;  
The bosom with long sighs labour'd;  
and mock  
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the  
luminous eyes,  
And the voice trembled and the hand.  
She said  
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had  
fail'd  
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;

<p>That all her labour was but as a block      Left in the quarry ; but she still were loth,      She still were loth to yield herself to one,      That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights      Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.      She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her      That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power      In knowledge : something wild within her breast,      A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.      And she had nursed me there from week to week :      Much had she learnt in little time.          In part      It was ill counsel had misled the girl      To vex true hearts : yet was she but a girl—      “ Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce !      When comes another such ? never, I think,      Till the Sun drop dead from the signs.”</p>	<p>Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know      The woman's cause is man's : they rise or sink      Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free :      For she that out of Lethe scales with man      The shining steps of Nature, shares with man      His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,      Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—      If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,      How shall men grow ? but work no more alone !      Our place is much : as far as in us lies      We two will serve them both in aiding her—      Will clear away the parasitic forms      That seem to keep her up but drag her down—      Will leave her space to burgeon out of all      Within her—let her make herself her own      To give or keep, to live and learn and be      All that not harms distinctive womanhood.      For woman is not undeveloped man,      But diverse : could we make her as the man,      Sweet Love were slain : his dearest bond is this,      Not like to like, but like in difference.      Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;      The man be more of woman, she of man ;      He gain in sweetness and in moral height,          or lose the wrestling thews that throws the world ;      The mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,      Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;      Till at the last she set herself to man,      Like perfect music unto noble words ;      And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time.</p>
<p>Her voice      Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,      And her great heart thro' all the faultful Past      Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break ;      Till notice of a change in the dark world      Was lipt about the acacias, and a bird,      That early woket to feed her little ones,      Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light :      She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.</p> <p>“ Blame not thyself too much,” I said, “ nor blame      Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws ;      These were the rough ways of the world till now.</p>	

Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,  
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,  
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,  
Distinct in individualities,  
But like each other ev'n as those who love.  
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men :  
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm :  
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.  
May these things be ! "

Sighing she spoke " I fear They will not."  
" Dear, but let us type them now In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest  
Of equal ; seeing either sex alone Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfills  
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,  
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
The single pure and perfect animal, The two-call'd heart beating, with one full stroke,  
Life."

And again sighing she spoke : " A dream  
That once was mine ! what woman taught you this ? "

" Alone " I said " from earlier than I know,  
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,  
I loved the woman : he, that doth not, lives  
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,  
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime :  
Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one

Not learned, save in gracious household ways,  
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet  
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce  
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,  
And girdled her with music. Happy he  
With such a mother ! faith in woman-kind  
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high  
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall  
He shall not blind his soul with clay."  
" But I,"  
Said Ida, tremulously, " so all unlike—  
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words :  
This mother is your model. I have heard  
Of your strange doubts : they well might be : I seem  
A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince ;  
You cannot love me."

" Nay but thee " I said  
" From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,  
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw  
Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods  
That mask'd thee from men's reverence up, and forced  
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood : now,  
Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee,  
Indeed I love : the new day comes, the light

Dearer for night, as dearer thou for  
faults  
Lived over : lift thine eyes ; my  
doubts are dead,  
My haunting sense of hollow shows :  
the change,  
This truthful change in thee has kill'd  
it. Dear,  
Look up, and let thy nature strike on  
mine,  
Like yonder morning on the blind  
half-world ;  
Approach and fear not ; breathe upon  
my brows ;  
In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
Melts mist-like into this bright hour,  
and this  
Is morn to more, and all the rich  
to-come  
Reels, as the golden Autumn wood-  
land reels  
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds.  
Forgive me,  
I waste my heart in signs : let be,  
My bride,  
My wife, my life. O we will walk  
this world,  
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
And so thro' those dark gates across  
the wild  
That no man knows. Indeed I love  
thee : come,  
Yield thyself up : my hopes and thine  
are one :  
Accomplish thou my manhood and  
thyself ;  
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and  
trust to me."

Yet how to bind the scattered scheme  
of seven  
Together in one sheaf ? What style  
could suit ?  
The men required that I should give  
throughout  
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,  
With which we banter'd little Lilia  
first :  
The women—and perhaps they felt  
their power,  
For something in the ballads which  
they sang,  
From their silent influence as they  
sat,  
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with  
burlesque,  
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn  
close—  
They hated banter, wish'd for some-  
thing real,  
A gallant fight, a noble princess—  
why  
Not make her true-heroic—true-  
sublime ?  
Or all, they said, as earnest as the  
close ?  
Which yet with such a framework  
scarce could be.  
Then rose a little feud betwixt the  
two,  
Betwixt the mockers and the realists :  
And I, betwixt them both, to please  
them both,  
And yet to give the story as it rose,  
I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
And maybe neither pleased myself  
nor them.

## CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you  
all  
The random scheme as wildly as it  
rose :  
The words are mostly mine ; for  
when we ceased  
There came a minute's pause, and  
Walter said,  
" I wish she had not yielded ! " then  
to me,  
" What, if you drest it up poetically ! "  
So pray'd the men, the women : I  
gave assent :

But Lilia pleased me, for she took  
no part  
In our dispute : the sequel of the tale  
Had touch'd her ; and she sat, she  
pluck'd the grass,  
She flung it from her, thinking : last,  
she fixt  
A showery glance upon her aunt, and  
said,  
" You—tell us what we are " who  
might have told,  
For she was cramm'd with theories  
out of books,  
But that there rose a shout : the gates  
were closed

At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,  
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these : we climb'd  
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw  
The happy valleys, half in light, and half  
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace ;  
Gray halls alone among their massive groves ;  
Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic tower  
Half lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat ;  
The shimmering glimpses of a stream ; the seas ;  
A red sail, or a white ; and far beyond, Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

"Look there, a garden ! " said my college friend, The Tory member's elder son " and there ! God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off, And keeps our Britain, whole within herself, A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled— Some sense of duty, something of a faith, Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made, Some patient force to change them when we will, Some civic manhood firm against the crowd— But yonder, whiff ! there comes a sudden heat, The gravest citizen seems to lose his head, The king is scared, the soldier will not fight, The little boys begin to shoot and stab, A kingdom topples over with a shriek Like an old woman, and down rolls the world

In mock heroics stranger than our own ; Revolts, republics, revolutions, most No graver than a schoolboys' barring out ; Too comic for the solemn things they are, Too solemn for the comic touches in them, Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas ! I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad."

"Have patience," I replied, "ourselves are full Of social wrong ; and maybe wildest dreams Are but the needful preludes of the truth : For me, the genial day, the happy crowd, The sport half-science, fill me with a faith. This fine old world of ours is but a child Yet in the go-cart. Patience ! Give it time To learn its limbs : there is a hand that guides."

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails, And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood, Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks, Among six boys, head under head, and look'd No little lily-handed Baronet he, A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman, A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep, A raiser of huge melons and of pine, A patron of some thirty charities, A pamphleteer on guano and on grain, A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none ; Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn ; Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those

That stood the nearest—now address'd to speech—  
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed  
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year  
To follow a shout rose again, and made  
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve  
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer  
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang  
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout  
More joyful than the city-roar that hails  
Premier or king! Why should not these great Sirs  
Give up their parks some dozen times a year  
To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,  
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on  
So much the gathering darkness charm'd we sat  
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,  
Perchance upon the future man the walls  
Blacken'd about us bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd,  
And gradually the powers of the night,  
That range above the region of the wind,  
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up  
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,  
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly, disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph  
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we went.

## IN MEMORIAM

Ā. H. H.

OBITU MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy  
face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and  
shade ;  
Thou madest Life in man and  
brute ;  
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy  
foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
Thou madest man, he knows not  
why ;  
He thinks he was not made to die ;  
And thou hast made him : thou art  
just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou :  
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;  
Our wills are ours, to make them  
thine.

Our little systems have their day ;  
They have their day and cease  
to be :  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than  
they.

We have but faith : we cannot  
know ;  
For knowledge is of things we see ;  
And yet we trust it comes from  
thee,  
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to  
more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
That mind and soul, according  
well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;  
We mock thee when we do not  
fear :  
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy  
light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;  
What seem'd my worth since I  
began ;  
For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
Thy creature, whom I found so  
fair.  
I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering  
cries,  
Confusions of a wasted youth ;  
Forgive them where they fail in  
truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-  
stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
And find in loss a gain to match?  
Or reach a hand th'o' time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be  
drown'd,  
Let darkness keep her raven gloss.  
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with death, to beat the  
ground,

Than that the victor Hours should  
scorn  
The long result of love, and boast,  
"Behold the man that loved and  
lost,  
But all he was is overworn."

## II

OLD Yew, which graspest at the  
stones  
That name the under-lying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the  
bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
And bring the firstling to the flock,  
And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale,  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of  
gloom

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to fail from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into thee.

## III

O SORROW, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blandy  
lun,  
A web is wov'n across the sky,  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun

"And all the phantom, Nature,  
stands—  
With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own,—  
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind?

## IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;  
My will is bondsman to the dark;  
I sit within a helmetless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou shouldst fail from thy  
desire,  
Who scarcely daarest to inquire,  
"What is it makes me beat so low?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early  
years.  
Break, thou deep vase of chilling  
tears,

That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd eyes;  
With morning wakes the will, and  
cries,

"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

## V

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel;  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me  
o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the  
cold;  
But that large grief which these  
enfold  
Is given in outline and no more.

## VI

ONE writes, that "Other friends  
remain,"  
That "Loss is common to the  
race"—  
And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for  
grain.

That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more:  
Too common! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, whereso'er thou be,  
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;  
A shot, ere half thy draught be  
done,  
Hath still'd the life that beat from  
thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor,—while thy head is  
bow'd,  
His heavy-shotted hammock-  
shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering  
grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
At that last hour to please him  
well;  
Who mused on all I had to tell,  
And something written, something  
thought;

Expecting still his advent home;  
And ever met him on his way  
With wishes, thinking, here to-day,  
Or here to-morrow will he come.

O'somewhere, meek unconscious dove,  
That sittest ranging golden hair;  
And glad to find thyself so fair,  
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest;  
And thinking "this will please him  
best,"  
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;  
And with the thought her colour  
burns;  
And, having left the glass, she  
turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future Lord  
Was drown'd in passing thro' the  
ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?  
And what to me remains of good?  
To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me no second friend.

## VII

DARK house, by which once more I  
stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used  
to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank  
day.

## VIII

A HAPPY lover who has come  
To look on her that loves him well,  
Who 'lights and rings the gateway  
bell,  
And learns her gone and far from  
home;

He saddens, all the magic light  
Dies off at once from bower and  
hall,

And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot  
In which we two were wont to meet,  
The field, the chamber and the  
street,  
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
In those deserted walks, may find  
A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care :

So seems it in my deep regret,  
O my forsaken heart, with thee  
And this poor flower of poesy  
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
I go to plant it on his tomb,  
That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or dying, there at least may die.

## IX

FAIR ship, that from the Italian  
shore

Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
With my lost Arthur's loved re-  
mains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him  
o'er.

So draw him home to those that  
mourn

In vain ; a favourable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,  
bright

As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the  
prow ;

Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps  
now,

My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run ;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me.

## x

I HEAR the noise about thy keel ;  
I hear the bell struck in the night ;  
I see the cabin-window bright ;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bringest the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign  
lands ;  
And letters unto trembling hands ;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd  
life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home-bred fancies : O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the  
rains,

Or where the kneeling hamlet  
drains

The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in  
brine ;  
And hands so often clasp'd in  
mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with  
shells.

## xi

CALM is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high  
wold,  
And on these dews that drench the  
furze,

And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
 That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
 And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
 To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
 These leaves that redder to the fall ;  
 And in my heart, if calm at all,  
 If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep.  
 And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
 And dead calm in that noble breast  
 Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

## xii

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
 To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
 Some dolorous message knit below  
 The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;  
 I leave this mortal ark behind,  
 A weight of nerves without a mind,  
 And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
 And reach the glow of southern skies,  
 And see the sails at distance rise,  
 And linger weeping on the marge,  
 And saying ; " Comes he thus, my friend ?  
 Is this the end of all my care ?"  
 And circle moaning in the air :  
 " Is this the end ? Is this the end ? "

And forward dart again, and play  
 About the prow, and back return  
 To where the body sits, and learn,  
 That I have been an hour away.

## xiii

TEARS of the widower, when he sees  
 A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
 And moves his doubtful arms, and feels  
 Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
 A void where heart on heart repos'd ;  
 And, where warm hands have prest and clos'd,  
 Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
 An awful thought, a life removed,  
 The human-hearted man I loved,  
 A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,  
 I do not suffer in a dream ;  
 For now so strange do these things seem,  
 Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
 And glance about the approaching sails,  
 As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,  
 And not the burthen that they bring.

## xiv

If one should bring me this report,  
 That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,  
 And I went down unto the quay,  
 And found thee lying in the port ;  
 And standing, muffled round with woe,  
 Should see thy passengers in rank  
 Come stepping lightly down the plank,  
 And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come  
 The man I held as half-divine ;  
 Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
 And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
 And how my life had droop'd of late,  
 And he should sorrow o'er my state  
 And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
No hint of death in all his frame,  
But found him all in all the same,  
I should not feel it to be strange.

## xv

TO-NIGHT the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping  
day :

The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rocks are blown about the skies :

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea ;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and  
tree

The sunbeam strikes along the world :

And but for fancies, which aver  
That all thy motions gently pass  
Athwart a piano of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and  
stir,

That makes the barren branches  
loud ;  
And but for fear it is not so,  
The wild unrest that lives in woe  
Would dote and pore on yonder  
cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
And onward drags a labouring  
breast,  
And topples round the droary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## xvi

WHAT words are these have fall'n  
from me ?

Can calm despair and wild unrest  
Be tenants of a single breast,  
Or sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take  
The touch of change in calm or  
storm ;  
But knows no more of transient  
form  
In her deep self, than some dead  
lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?  
Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
And staggers blindly ere she sink ?  
And stunn'd me from my power to  
think

And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man  
Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
And flashes into false and true,  
And mingles all without a plan ?

## xvii

Thou comest, much wept for : such  
a breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my  
prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week : the days go by :  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st  
roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark ;  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by  
thee :  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

## xviii

'Tis well ; 'tis something ; we may  
stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the  
head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of  
sleep.  
And come, whatever loves to  
weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips  
impart

The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

## XIX

THE Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no  
more ;  
They laid him by the pleasant  
shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
When fill'd with tears that cannot  
fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;  
My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

## XX

THE lesser griefs that may be said,  
That breathe a thousand tender  
vows,  
Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their fooling as it is,  
And weep the fullness from the  
mind :  
" It will be hard " they say " to  
find  
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort win ;  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain  
freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
And scarce endure to draw the  
breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms sit :

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and think  
" How good ! how kind ! and he is  
gone."

## XXI

I SING to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me  
wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whereon to  
blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he  
speak ;  
" This fellow would make weakness  
weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, " Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain,  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth, " Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people  
throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When Science reaches forth her  
    arms  
    To feel from world to world, and  
    charms  
Her secret from the latest moon ? "

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :  
    Ye never knew the sacred dust :  
    I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And one is glad ; her note is gay,  
    For now her little ones have  
    ranged ;  
    And one is sad ; her note is  
    changed,  
Because her brood is stol'n away.

## XXII

THE path by which we twain did go,  
    Which led by tracts that pleased  
    us well,  
    Thro' four sweet years arose and  
    fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to  
    snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the  
    way,  
    And crown'd with all the season  
    lent,  
    From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began  
    To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
    As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
    And spread his mantle dark and  
    cold,  
    And wrapt thee formless in the  
    fold,  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
    Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
    And think, that somewhere in the  
    waste

The Shadow sits and waits for me.

## XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
    Or breaking into song by fits,  
    Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to  
    foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
    I wander, often falling lame,  
    And looking back to whence I  
    came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads ;  
And crying, " how changed from  
    where it ran  
    Thro' lands where not a leaf was  
    dumb ;  
    But all the lavish hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,  
    And Fancy light from Fancy  
    caught,  
    And Thought leapt out to wed with  
    Thought,  
Ere Thought could wed itself with  
    Speech ;

And all we met was fair and good,  
    And all was good that Time could  
    bring,  
    And all the secret of the Spring  
Moved in the chambers of the blood ;

And many an old philosophy  
    On Argive heights divinely sang,  
    And round us all the thicket rang  
To many a flute of Arcady."

## XXIV

AND was the day of my delight  
    As pure and perfect as I say ?  
    The very source and fount of Day  
Is dash'd with wandering isles of  
    night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
    This earth had been the Paradise  
    It never look'd to human eyes  
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief  
Makes former gladness loom so  
great?

The lowness of the present state,  
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win  
A glory from its being far;  
And orb into the perfect star  
We saw not, when we moved therein?

## XXV

I KNOW that this was Life,—the track  
Whereon with equal feet we fared;  
And then, as now, the day prepared  
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
As light as carrier-birds in air;  
I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
When mighty Love would cleave  
in twain  
The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him.

## XXVI

STILL onward winds the dreary way;  
I with it; for I long to prove  
No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
And goodness, and hath power to  
see  
Within the green the moulder'd  
tree,  
And towers fall'n as soon as  
built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee  
Or see (in Him is no before)  
In more of life true life no more,  
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII

I ENVY not in any moods  
The captive void of noble rage,  
The linnet born within the cage,  
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes  
His license in the field of time,  
Unletter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted  
troth  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;  
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
"Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII

THE time draws near the birth of  
Christ:  
The moon is hid; the night is still;  
The Christmas bells from hill to  
hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and  
moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the  
sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and  
peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would  
break  
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy,  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry merry bells of Yule.

## xxix

With such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve.

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight,  
In dance and song and game and jest.  
Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use  
and Wont,  
That guard the portals of the house,  
Old sister of a day gone by.  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new,  
Why should they miss their yearly  
due  
Before their time? They too will  
die.

## xxx

With trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas  
hearth;  
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gambol'd, making vain pre-  
tence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused the winds were in the  
beech  
We heard them sweep the winter  
land;  
And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang,  
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him  
Last year impetuously we sang.

We ceased a gentler feeling crept  
Upon us surely rest is meet:  
"They rest," we said, "their sleep  
is sweet,"  
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;  
Once more we sang "They do  
not die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they  
change,

Rapt from the sickle and the frail  
With gather'd power, yet the  
same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
Draw forth the cheerful day from  
night  
O Father, touch the east, and  
light  
The light that shone when Hope was  
born.

## xxxii

WHEN Lazarus left his charnel cave,  
And home to Mary's house return'd,  
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where went thou, brother, those  
four days?"  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours  
met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful  
sound,  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd :  
He told it not ; or something  
seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

## XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he  
sits,  
And he that brought him back is  
there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's  
face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so com-  
plete,  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's  
feet  
With costly spikenard and with  
tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful  
prayers,  
Whose loves in higher love endure ;  
What souls possess themselves  
so pure,  
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

## XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm  
Mayst seem to have reach'd a  
purer air,  
Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
Her early Heaven, her happy  
views ;  
Nor thou with shadow'd hint con-  
fuse  
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good :  
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And ev'n for want of such a type.

## XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks  
In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?  
"Twere hardly worth my while to  
choose  
Of things all mortal, or to use

A little patience ere I die ;

"Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent  
draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## XXXV

YET if some voice that man could  
trust  
Should murmur from the narrow  
house,  
" The cheeks drop in ; the body  
bows ;  
Man dies : nor is there hope in dust ; "

Might I not say ? " yet even here,  
But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
To keep so sweet a thing alive : "  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The meanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift or  
slow  
Draw down Aeonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
" The sound of that forgetful shore  
Will change my sweetness more and  
more,  
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me what profits it to put  
An idle case ? If Death were seen  
At first as Death, Love had not  
been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut

More fellowship of sluggish moods,  
Or in his coarsest Satyr shape  
Had bruised the herb and crush'd  
the grape,  
And bask'd and batten'd in the  
woods.

## XXXVI

Two' truths in manhood darkly join,  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
We yield ill blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current  
com .

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
Where truth in closest words shall  
fail,

When truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors

And so the Word had breath, and  
wrought

With human hands the creed of  
creeds  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought ,

Which he may read that binds the  
sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the  
grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the  
wife

In roaring round the coral reef.

## XXXVII

URANIA speaks with darken'd brow  
" Thou pratest hero where thou  
at least ;

This earth has many a pure priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou

Go down beside thy native hill,  
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melompome replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek;  
" I am not worthy ev'n to speal  
Of thy prevailing mysteries ,

For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues ,

But brooding on the dear one dead,  
And all he said of things divine,  
(And dear to me as sacred wine  
To dying lips is all he said),

I murmur'd, as I came along,  
Of comfort clasp'd in truth re-  
veal'd ,  
And loiter'd in the master's field,  
And darken'd sanctities with song "

## XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,  
Tho' always under alter'd skies  
The purple from the distance dries,  
My prospect and horizon gone

No joy the blowing season gives,  
The herald melodies of spring.  
But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives

If any care for what is here  
Survive in spirits render'd free  
Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## XXXIX

Could we forget the widow'd hour  
And look on Spirits breathed away,  
As on a maiden in the day  
When first she wears her orange-  
flower !

When crown'd with blessing she doth  
rise  
To take her latest leave of home,  
And hopes and light regrets that  
come  
Make April of her tender eyes ,

And doubtful joys the father move,  
And tears are on the mother's face,  
As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
Becoming as is meet and fit  
A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
A life that bears immortal fruit  
In such great offices as suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !  
How often shall her old fireside  
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have  
told,  
And bring her babe, and make her  
boast,  
Till even those that miss'd her  
most,  
Shall count new things as dear as  
old :

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
Till growing winters lay me low ;  
My paths are in the fields I know  
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XL

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
Did ever rise from high to higher ;  
As mounts the heavenward altar-  
fire,  
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something  
strange,  
And I have lost the links that  
bound  
Thy changes ; here upon the  
ground,  
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly I yet that this could be—  
That I could wing my will with  
might  
To leap the grades of life and light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee :

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
To that vague fear implied in death ;  
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
The howlings from forgotten fields ;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the  
moor  
An inner trouble I behold,  
A spectral doubt which makes me  
cold,  
That I shall be thy mate no more.

Tho' following with an upward mind  
The wonders that have come to  
thee,  
Thro' all the secular to-be,  
But evermore a life behind.

## XL.I

I vex my heart with fancies dim ;  
He still outstript me in the race ;  
It was but unity of place  
That made me dream I rank'd with  
him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
And he the much-beloved again,  
A lord of large experience, train  
To riper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those  
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
When one that loves but knows  
not, reaps  
A truth from one that loves and  
knows ?

## XL.II

If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
And every spirit's folded bloom  
Thro' all its intervall gloom  
In some long trance should slumber  
on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
Bare of the body, night it last,  
And silent traces of the past  
Be all the colour of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man,  
So that still garden of the souls  
In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole  
As when he loved me here in Time,  
And at the spiritual prime  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

## XLIII

How fares it with the happy dead?  
For here the man is more and  
more;

But he forgets the days before  
God shut the doorways of his head

The days have vanish'd, tone and  
tint,

And yet perhaps the hoarding  
sense  
Gives out at times (he knows not  
whence)

A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years  
(If Death so taste Lethean springs)  
May some dim touch of earthly  
things

Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
O turn thee round, resolve the  
doubt,

My guardian angel will speak out  
In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLIV

The baby new to earth and sky,  
What time his tender palm is prest  
Against the circle of the breast,  
Has never thought that "this is I;"

But as he grows he gathers much,  
And leans the use of "I," and  
"me,"  
And finds "I am not what I see,  
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind  
From whence clear memory may  
begin,  
As thro' the frame that binds him  
in  
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
Which else were fruitless of their  
due,  
Had man to learn himself anew  
Beyond the second birth of Death.

## XLV

We ranging down this lower track,  
The path we came by, thorn and  
flower,  
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it there no shade can last  
In that deep dawn behind the  
tomb,  
But clear from marge to marge  
shall bloom  
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;  
The fruitful hours of still increase;  
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
A bounded field, nor stretching far;  
Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
A tosy warmth from marge to marge.

## XLVI

THAT each, who seems a separate  
whole,  
Should move his rounds, and  
fusing all  
The skirts of self again, should fall  
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:  
Eternal form shall still divide  
The eternal soul from all beside;  
And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
Enjoying each the other's good :  
What vaster dream can hit the  
mood  
Of Love on earth ? He seeks at  
least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
Before the spirits fade away,  
Some landing-place, to clasp and  
say,  
" Farewell ! We lose ourselves in  
light."

## XLVII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
Were taken to be such as closed  
Grave doubts and answers here  
proposed,

Then these were such as men might  
scorn :

Her care is not to part and prove ;  
She takes, when harsher moods  
remit,

What slender shade of doubt may  
fit,  
And makes it vassal unto love :

And hence, indeed, she sports with  
words,  
But better serves a wholesome  
law,

And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords :

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
But rather loosens from the lip  
Short swallow-flights of song, that  
dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLVIII

From art, from nature, from the  
schools,  
Let random influences glance,  
Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall  
lisp,  
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathes,  
The slightest air of song shall  
breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that  
make  
The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,  
Whose muffled motions blindly  
drown

The bases of my life in tears.

## XLIX

Be near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the  
nerves prick

And tingle ; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer  
trust ;  
And Time, a maniac scattering  
dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and  
sing,  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

## L

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side ?  
Is there no baseness we would  
hide ?  
No inner vileness that we dread ?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden  
shame

And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:  
Shall love be blamed for want of  
faith?

There must be wisdom with great  
Death

The dead shall look me thro' and  
thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling  
hours

With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

## LI

I CANNOT love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved;  
My words are only words, and  
moved

Upon the topmost froth of thought.

" Yet blame not thou thy plaintive  
song."

The Spirit of true love replied;

" Thou canst not move me from  
thy side,

Nor human frailty do me wrong.

" What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears?

What record? not the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian  
blue:

" So fact not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash'd with flecks of  
sin.

Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from  
pearl."

## LII

How many a father have I seen,  
A sober man, among his boys,  
Whose youth was full of foolish  
noise,

Who wears his manhood halo and  
green:

And dare we to this fancy give,  
That had the wild oat not been  
sown,  
The soil, left barren, scarce had  
grown  
The grain by which a man may live?

Oh, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth,  
Yet who would preach it as a  
truth

To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark, and  
be

Procress to the Lords of Hell.

## LIII

On yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of  
blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile  
complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?  
An infant crying in the night:  
An infant crying for the light:  
And with no language but a cry.

## LIV

THE wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likeliest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil  
dreams?

So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere  
Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of  
cares  
Upon the great world's altar-  
stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and  
grop,

And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

## LV

"So careful of the type?" but no.  
From scarped cliff and quarried  
stone  
She cries "a thousand types are  
gone:

I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me :  
I bring to life, I bring to death :  
The spirit does but mean the  
breath :

I know no more." And he, shall  
he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so  
fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry  
skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless  
prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law—  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his  
creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless  
ills,

Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their  
slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with  
him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVI

PEACE; come away: the song of  
woe  
Is after all an earthly song:  
Peace; come away: we do him  
wrong  
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are  
pale;  
But half my life I leave behind:  
Methinks my friend is richly  
shrin'd;  
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead;  
And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,  
"Adieu, adieu" for evermore.

## LVII

IN those sad words I took farewell:  
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
Of hearts that beat from day to  
day,

Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
And those cold crypts where they  
shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd : " Where-  
fore grieve

Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?  
Abide a little longer here,  
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

## LVIII

O SORROW, wilt thou live with me  
No casual mistress, but a wife,  
My bosom-friend and half of life ;  
As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
And put thy harsher moods aside,  
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,  
Nor will it lesson from to-day ;  
But I'll have leave at times to play  
As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
With so much hope for years to  
come,  
That, howso'er I know thee, some  
Could hardly tell what name were  
thine.

## LIX

He past ; a soul of nobler tone :  
My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
Like some poor girl whose heart is  
set

On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
She finds the baseness of her lot,  
Half jealous of she knows not what,  
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;  
She sighs amid her narrow days,  
Moving about the household ways,  
In that dark house where she was  
born.

The foolish neighbours come and  
go,  
And tease her till the day draws  
by :  
At night she weeps, " How vain  
am I !  
How should he love a thing so low ? "

## LX

If, in thy second state sublime,  
Thy ransom'd reason change re-  
plies

With all the circle of the wise,  
The perfect flower of human time :

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
How dimly character'd and slight,  
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and  
night,  
How blanch'd with darkness must I  
grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
Where thy first form was made a  
man ;  
I love thee, Spirit, and love, nor  
can  
The soul of Shakespeare love thee  
more.

## LXI

Tuo' if an eye that's downward cast  
Could make thee somewhat blench  
or fail,  
Then be my love an idle tale,  
And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
When he was little more than boy,  
On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while  
His other passion wholly dies,  
Or in the light of deeper eyes  
Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
And love in which my hound has  
part,  
Can hang no weight upon my heart  
In its assumptions up to heaven ;

## IN MEMORIAM

And I am so much more than these,  
As thou, perchance, art more than  
I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy  
And I would set their pains at ease.  
So may'st thou watch me where I  
weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXXXI

Dost thou look back on what hath  
been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green;  
Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy  
chance,  
And breasts the blows of circum-  
stance,  
And grapples with his evil star;  
Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne;  
And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning  
slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire;  
Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,  
The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate;  
Who ploughs with pain his native  
lea  
And reaps the labour of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands;  
"Does my old friend remember me?"

LXIV  
SWEET soul, do with me as thou  
wilt;  
I lull a fancy trouble-lost  
With "Love's too precious to be  
lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt."  
And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:  
Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee,  
And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXV

You thought my heart too far  
diseased;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.  
The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost;  
Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand;  
He plays with threads, he beats his  
chair  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;  
His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVI

WHEN on my bed the moonlight  
falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls:  
Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;  
From off my bed the moonlight  
dies;  
And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:  
And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the dark church like a  
ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

## LXVII

WHEN in the down I sink my head,  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times  
my breath;  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows  
not Death,  
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:  
I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
When all our path was fresh with  
dew,  
And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillee to the breaking morn.  
But what is this? I turn about,  
I find a trouble in thine eye,  
Which makes me sad I know not  
why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:  
But ere the lark hath loft the lea  
I wake, and I discern the truth;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## LXVIII

I DREAM'D there would be Spring  
no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was  
lost:  
The streets were black with smoke  
and frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door:  
I wander'd from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny  
boughs:  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary  
hairs:  
They call'd me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns:  
They call'd me fool, they call'd me  
child:  
I found an angel of the night;  
The voice was low, the look was  
bright;  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled:  
He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
That seem'd to touch it into leaf:  
The voice was not the voice of grief,  
The words were hard to understand.

## LXIX

I CANNOT see the features right,  
When on the gloom I strive to  
paint  
The face I know; the hues are  
faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night;  
Cloud-towers by ghostly masons  
wrought,  
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
A hand that points, and paled  
shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;  
And crowds that stream from yawn-  
ing doors,  
And shoals of pucker'd faces  
drive;  
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores:

Till all at once beyond the will  
I hear a wizard music roll,  
And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it  
still.

## LXX

SLEEP, kinsman thou to death and  
trance  
And madness, thou hast forged at  
last  
A night-long Present of the Past  
In which we went thro' summer  
France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul ?  
 Then bring an opiate trebly  
 strong,  
 Drug down the blindfold sense of  
 wrong  
 That so my pleasure may be whole ;  
 While now we talk as once we talk'd  
 Of men and minds, the dust of  
 change,  
 The days that grow to something  
 strange,  
 In walking as of old we walk'd  
 Beside the river's wooded reach,  
 The fortress, and the mountain  
 ridge,  
 The cataract flashing from the  
 bridge,  
 The breaker breaking on the beach.

## LXXI

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
 And howlest, issuing out of night,  
 With blasts that blow the poplar  
 white,  
 And lash with storm the streaming  
 pane ?  
 Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
 To pine in that reverse of doom,  
 Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
 And blurr'd the splendour of the  
 sun ;  
 Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
 With thy quick tears that make  
 the rose  
 Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
 Her crimson fringes to the shower ;  
 Who might'st have heaved a wind-  
 less flame  
 Up the deep East, or, whispering,  
 play'd  
 A chequer-work of beam and  
 shade  
 Along the hills, yet look'd the same,  
 As wan, as chill, as wild as now ;  
 Day, mark'd as with some hideous  
 crime,  
 When the dark hand struck down  
 thro' time,  
 And cancell'd nature's best : but  
 thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd  
 brows  
 Thro' clouds that drench the  
 morning star,  
 And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf  
 afar,  
 And sow the sky with flying boughs,  
 And up thy vault with roaring sound  
 Climb thy thick noon, disastrous  
 day ;  
 Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
 And hide thy shame beneath the  
 ground.

## LXXII

So many worlds, so much to do,  
 So little done, such things to be,  
 How know I what had need of  
 thee,  
 For thou wert strong as thou wert  
 true ?  
 The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
 The head hath miss'd an earthly  
 wreath :  
 I curse not nature, no, nor death ;  
 For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass ; the path that each man  
 trod  
 Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :  
 What fame is left for human deeds  
 In endless age ? It rests with God.

A hollow wreath of dying fame,  
 Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
 And self-infolds the large results  
 Of force that would have forged a  
 name.

## LXXIII

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
 To those that watch it more and  
 more,  
 A likeness, hardly seen before,  
 Comes out—to some one of his race :

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
 I see thee what thou art, and know  
 Thy likeness to the wise below,  
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
And what I see I leave unsaid,  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has  
made  
His darkness beautiful with thee

## LXXIV

I LEAVE thy praises unexpress'd  
In verso that brings myself relief,  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howsoe'er expert  
In fitting aptest words to things,  
Or voice the richest-toned that  
sings,  
Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days  
To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
And round thee with the breeze of  
song  
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
And, while we breathe beneath the  
sun,  
The world which credits what is  
done  
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;  
But somewhere, out of human view,  
Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXV

TAKE wings of fancy, and ascend,  
And in a moment set thy face  
Where all the starry heavens of  
space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighton thro'  
The secular abyss to come,  
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
The darkness of our planet, last,  
Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy  
bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are  
vain ;  
And what are they when these  
remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

## LXXVI

WHAT hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him, who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives,  
that lie

Foreshorion'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
May bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;  
Or when a thousand moons shall  
wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that  
tells  
A grief, then changed to something  
else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.  
But what of that ? My darken'd  
ways  
Shall ring with music all the same ;  
To breathe my loss is more than  
fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVII

AGAIN at Christmas did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas  
hearth :

The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with  
frost,  
No wing of wind the region swept,  
But over all things brooding slept  
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
Again our ancient games had place,  
The mimic picture's breathing  
grace,  
And dance and song and hoodman-  
blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?  
No single tear, no mark of pain.  
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?  
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!  
No—mixt with all this mystic  
frame  
Her deep relations are the same,  
But with long use her tears are dry.

## LXXVIII

"More than my brothers are to me"—  
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!  
I know thee of what force thou art  
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,  
As moulded like in nature's mint;  
And hill and wood and field did  
print

The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
Thro' all his eddying coves; the  
same  
All winds that roam the twilight  
came  
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
One lesson from one book we  
learn'd,  
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet  
turn'd  
To black and brown on kindled brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
But he was rich where I was poor,  
And he supplied my want the more  
As his vulkeness fitted mine.

## LXXIX

If any vague desire should rise,  
That holy Death ero Arthur died  
Had moved me kindly from his  
side,  
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
The grief my loss in him had  
wrought,  
A grief as deep as life or thought,  
But stay'd in peace with God and  
man.

I make a picture in the brain;  
I hear the sentence that he speaks;  
He bears the burthen of the weeks,  
But turns his burthen into gain.

Hi' credit thus shall set me free;  
And, influence-rich to soothe and  
save,

Unused example from the grave  
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## LXXX

COULD I have said while he was here  
" My love shall now no further  
range;  
There cannot come a mellower  
change,  
For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store:  
What end is here to my complaint?  
This haunting whisper makes me  
faint,  
" More years had made me love thee  
more."

But Death returns an answer sweet:  
" My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
It might have drawn from after-  
heat."

## LXXXI

I WAGE not any feud with Death  
For changes wrought on form and  
face,  
No lower life that earth's embrace  
May breed with him, can slight my  
faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
From state to state the spirit walks;  
And these are but the shatter'd  
stalks,  
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
The use of virtue out of earth :  
I know transplanted human worth  
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
The wrath that garners in my heart ;  
He put our lives so far apart  
We cannot hear each other speak.

## LXXXII

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
O sweet new-year delaying long ;  
Thou doest expectant nature  
wrong ;  
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded  
noons,  
Thy sweetness from its proper  
place ?

Can trouble live with April days,  
Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove  
spire,

The little speedwell's darling blue,  
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
That longs to burst a frozen bud,  
And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXIII

WHEN I contemplate all alone  
The life that had been thine below,  
And fix my thoughts on all the  
glow  
To which thy crescent would have  
grown ;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
A central warmth diffusing bliss  
In glance and smile, and clasp and  
kiss,  
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly  
mine ;  
For now the day was drawing on,  
When thou should'st link thy life  
with one  
Of mine own house, and boys of  
thine

Had babbled " Uncle " on my knee ;  
But that remorseless iron hour  
Made cypress of her orange flower  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
To clap their cheeks, to call them  
mine.  
I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,  
Thy partner in the flowery walk  
Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest ;

While now thy prosperous labour fills  
The lips of men with honest praise,  
And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;  
And all the train of bounteous  
hours  
Conduct by paths of growing powers,  
To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should fail from off the  
globe ;

What time mine own might also flee,  
As link'd with thine in love and  
fate,  
And, hovering o'er the dolorous  
strait  
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
And He that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining  
hand,  
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant ?  
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore  
 wake  
 The old bitterness again, and break  
 The low beginnings of content.

## LXXXIV

THIS truth came borne with bier  
 and pall,  
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
 Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
 Demanding, so to bring relief  
 To this which is our common  
 grief,

What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above  
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;  
 And whether love for him have  
 drain'd

My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as  
 draws

A faithful answer from the breast,  
 Thro' light reproaches, half ex-  
 prest,

And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
 Till on mine ear this message falls,  
 That in Vienna's fatal walls  
 God's finger touch'd him, and he  
 slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
 That range above our mortal state,  
 In circle round the blessed gate,  
 Received and gave him welcome  
 there ;

And led him thro' the blissful  
 climes,  
 And show'd him in the fountain  
 fresh  
 All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were  
 dim,  
 Whose life, whose thoughts were  
 little worth,  
 To wander on a darken'd earth,  
 Where all things round me breathed  
 of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
 O heart, with kindest motion  
 warm,  
 A sacred essence, other form,  
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than  
 I,  
 How much of act at human hands  
 The sense of human will demands,  
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
 I feel and feel, tho' left alone,  
 His being working in mine own,  
 The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
 With gifts of grace, that might  
 express  
 All-comprehensive tenderness,  
 All-subtilising intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved  
 To works of weakness, but I find  
 An image comforting the mind,  
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
 That loved to handle spiritual  
 strife,  
 Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
 For other friends that once I met ;  
 Nor can it suit me to forget  
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo, your love : I count it crime  
 To mourn for any overmuch ;  
 I, the divided half of such  
 A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
Eternal, separate from fears  
The all assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
And Spring that swells the narrow  
brook,  
And Autumn, with a noise of  
books,  
That gather in the waning woods,  
And every pulse of wind and wave  
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
My old affection of the tomb,  
And my prime passion in the grave

My old affection of the tomb,  
A part of stillness, yearns to speak  
"Ause, and get thee forth and seek  
A friendship for the years to come

I watch thee from the quiet shoal,  
Thy spirit up to mine can reach,  
But in dear words of human speech  
We two communicate no more."

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain  
The stilly clearness of the free ?  
How is it ? Canst thou feel for  
me  
Some painless sympathy with pain ?"  
And lightly does the whisper fall ;  
"Tis hard for thee to fathom  
this,  
I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead,  
Or so methinks the dead would say,  
Or so shall grief with symbols play,  
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
That these things pass, and I shall  
prove  
A meeting somewhere, love with  
love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend,

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
I could not, if I would, transfer  
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
The promise of the golden hours ?  
First love, first friendship, equal  
powers,  
That marry with the virgin heart

Still musing, that cannot but deplore,  
That beats within a lonely place,  
That yet remembers his embrace,  
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not  
rest  
Quite in the love of what is gone,  
But seeks to beat in time with one  
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
The primrose of the later year,  
As not unlike to that of Spring.

## LXXXV

SWEET after showers, ambrosial air,  
That rollst from the gorgeous  
gloom  
Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare  
The round of space, and rapt below  
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
And shadowing down the horned  
flood  
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
The full new life that feeds thy  
breath  
Throughout my frame, till Doubt  
and Death,  
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly.

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
On leagues of odour streaming far,  
To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper " Peace."

## LXXXVI

I PAST beside the reverend walls  
In which of old I wore the gown,  
I rov'd at random thro' the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls,

And heard once more in college fane  
The storm their high-built organs  
make,  
And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophets blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant  
shout,  
The measured pulse of racing oars  
Among the willows; paced the  
shores  
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
The same, but not the same; and  
last  
Up that long walk of limes I past  
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:  
I linger'd; all within was noise  
Of songs, and clapping hands, and  
boys  
That crash'd the glass and beat the  
floor;

Where once we held debate, a band  
Of youthful friends, on mind and  
art,  
And labour, and the changing  
mart,  
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
But send it slackly from the string;  
And one would pierce an outer  
ring,  
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,  
Would cleave the mark. A willing  
ear  
We lent him. Who, but hung to  
hear  
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and  
grace  
And music in the bounds of law,  
To those conclusions when we saw  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;  
And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo.

## LXXXVII

WILD bird, whose warble, liquid  
sweet,  
Rings Eden thro' the budded  
quicks,  
O tell me where the senses mix,  
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes  
employ  
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I — my harp would prelude woe—  
I cannot all command the strings;  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXVIII

WITCH-ELMS that counterchange the  
floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and  
bright;  
And thou, with all thy breadth and  
height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows  
fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of  
town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;  
He mixt in all our simple sports;  
They pleased him, fresh from  
brawling courts  
And dusty purlicues of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the  
heat:

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning  
dew,  
The gust that round the garden  
flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing  
pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fit  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn

Or in the all golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and  
flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon.

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
And break the livelong summer day  
With banquet in the distant woods,

Whereat we glanced from theme to  
theme,  
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream,

But if I praised the busy town,  
He loved to rail against it still,  
For "ground in yonder social mill  
We rub each other's angles down,

And merge" he said "in form and  
gloss  
The picturesque of man and man"  
We talk'd the stream beneath us  
ran,  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave,  
And last, returning from afar,  
Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
We heard behind the woodbine  
veil  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honied hours.

## LXXXIX

He tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
Where highest heaven, who first  
could fling  
Thus bitter seed among mankind,

That could the dead, whose dying  
eyes  
Were closed with wail, resume their  
life,  
They would but find in child and  
wife  
An un welcome when they rise.

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with  
wine,  
To pledge them with a kindly tear,  
To talk them o'er, to wish them  
here,  
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,  
Behold their brides in other hands.  
The hard heir strides about their  
lands,  
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of  
these,  
Not less the yet-loved sire would  
make  
Confusion worse than death, and  
shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear but come thou back to me  
Whatever change the years have  
wrought,  
I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee.

## xc

WHEN rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
And rarely pipes the mounted  
thrush,  
Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
 Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;  
 The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
 Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
 May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
 Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
 That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,  
 But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,  
 Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
 And like a finer light in light.

## xcii

If any vision should reveal  
 Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
 As but the canker of the brain ;  
 Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal  
 To chances where our lots were cast  
 Together in the days behind,  
 I might but say, I hear a wind  
 Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
 A fact within the coming year ;  
 And tho' the months, revolving near,  
 Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
 But spiritual presentiments,  
 And such refraction of events  
 As often rises ere they rise.

## xciii

I SHALL not see thee. Dare I say  
 No spirit ever brake the band  
 That stays him from the native land,  
 Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
 But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
 Where all the nerve of sense is numb ;  
 Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
 With gods in unconjectured bliss,  
 O, from the distance of the abyss  
 Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear  
 The wish too strong for words to name ;  
 That in this blindness of the frame  
 My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## xciv

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
 With what divine affections bold,  
 Should be the man whose thought would hold  
 An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
 The spirits from their golden day,  
 Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
 My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
 Imaginations calm and fair,  
 The memory like a cloudless air,  
 The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,  
 And doubt beside the portal waits,  
 They can but listen at the gates,  
 And hear the household jar within.

## xcv

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
 For underfoot the herb was dry ;  
 And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky  
 The silvery haze of summer drawn ;  
 And calm that let the tapers burn  
 Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :  
 The brook alone far-off was heard,  
 And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes  
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
Withdrew themselves from me and night,  
And in the house light after light  
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read  
Of that glad year which once had been,  
In those fall'n leaves which kept  
their green,  
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke  
The silent-speaking words, and strange  
Was love's dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
On doubts that drive the coward back,  
And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
The dead man touch'd me from the past,  
And all at once it seem'd at last  
His living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd  
About empyreal heights of thought,  
And came on that which is, and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—  
The blows of Death. At length my trance  
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame  
In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
A breeze began to tremble o'er  
The large leaves of the sycamore,  
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,  
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung  
The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said

“ The dawn, the dawn,” and died away ;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day.

xcv

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light blue eyes  
Are tender over drowning flies,  
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not : one indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true :

Perplex'd in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest  
doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd  
strength,  
He would not make his judgment  
blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them: thus he came at  
length

To find a stronger faith his own;  
And Power was with him in the  
night,  
Which makes the darkness and the  
light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,  
But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of  
gold,  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## xcvi

My love has talk'd with rocks and  
trees;  
He finds on misty mountain-ground  
His own vast shadow glory-  
crown'd;  
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—  
I look'd on these and thought of  
thee  
In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on  
eye,  
Their hearts of old have beat in  
tune,  
Their meetings made December  
June,  
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;  
The days she never can forget  
Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
He reads the secret of the star,  
He seems so near and yet so far,  
He looks so cold: she thinks him  
kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
A wither'd violet is her bliss;  
She knows not what his greatness  
is;  
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
Of early faith and plighted vows;  
She knows but matters of the  
house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
She darkly feels him great and  
wise,  
She dwells on him with faithful  
eyes,  
"I cannot understand: I love."

## xcvii

You leave us: you will see the  
Rhine,  
And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
When I was there with him; and  
go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest  
breath,  
That City. All her splendour  
seems  
No livelier than the wisp that  
gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me:  
I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
The birth, the bridal ; friend from  
friend  
Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
Above more graves, a thousand  
wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
By each cold hearth, and sadness  
flings  
Her shadow on the blaze of kings :  
And yet myself have heard him  
say,

That not in any mother town  
With statelier progress to and fro  
The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under bough

Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,  
He told me, lives in any crowd,  
When all is gay with lamps, and  
loud  
With sport and song, in booth and  
tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;  
And wheels the circled dance, and  
breaks  
The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

## xcviii

RISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
So loud with voices of the birds,  
So thick with lowings of the herds,  
Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling  
red  
On yon swell'n brook that bubbles  
fast

By meadows breathing of the past,  
And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurest in the foliaged caves  
A song that slighteth the coming  
care,  
And Autumn laying here and  
there  
A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy  
breath  
To myriads on the genial earth,  
Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,  
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
To-day they count as kindred souls ;  
They know me not, but mourn with  
me.

## xcix

I CLIMB the hill : from end to end  
Of all the landscape underneath,  
I find no place that does not  
breathe

Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
Or low morass and whispering reed,  
Or simple stile from mead to  
mead,  
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
That hears the latest linnet trill,  
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill,  
And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;  
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
To left and right thro' meadowy  
curves,

That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
And each reflects a kindlier day ;  
And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

## c

UNWATCH'D, the garden bough shall  
sway,  
The tender blossom flutter down,  
Unloved, that beech will gather  
brown,  
This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
Ray round with flames her disk  
of seed,

And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air :

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
The brook shall babble down the  
plain,  
At noon or when the lesser wain  
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
And flood the haunts of hern and  
crake ;

Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove :

Till from the garden and the wild  
A fresh association blow,  
And year by year the landscape  
grow

Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the labourer tills  
His wonted glebe, or lops the  
glades ;

And year by year our memory  
fades

From all the circle of the hills.

## C1

We leave the well-beloved place  
Where first we gazed upon the  
sky ;

The rools, that heard our earliest  
cry,

Will shelter one of stranger race,

We go, but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden-walks I move,  
Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, here thy boyhood sung  
Long since its matin song, and  
heard

The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassel-hung.

The other answers, " Yea, but here  
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
With thy lost friend among the  
bowers,

And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,  
And each prefers his separate  
claim,

Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set  
To leave the pleasant fields and  
farms ;  
They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

## CII

On that last night before we went  
From out the doors where I was  
bred,  
I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
And maidens with me : distant  
hills  
From hidden summits fed with  
rills  
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
They sang of what is wise and  
good  
And graceful. In the centre stood  
A statue veil'd, to which they sang :

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to  
me,  
The shape of him I loved, and love  
For ever : then flew in a dove  
And brought a summons from the  
sea :

And when they learnt that I must go  
They wept and wail'd, but led the  
way  
To where a little shallop lay  
At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,  
And shadowing bluff that made  
the banks,  
We glided winding under ranks  
Of Iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore,  
And roll'd the floods in grander  
space,  
The maidens gather'd strength and  
grace

And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart  
And watch'd them, wax'd in  
every limb;

I felt the thews of Anakim,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,  
And one would chant the history  
Of that great race, which is to be,  
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
Began to foam, and we to draw  
From deep to deep, to where we  
saw

A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
But thrice as large as man he  
bent

To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one  
mind

Bewail'd their lot; I did them  
wrong:

"We served thee here," they said,  
"so long,

And wilt thou leave us now behind?"

So rapt I was, they could not win  
An answer from my lips, but he  
Replying, "Enter likewise ye  
And go with us;" they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
A music out of sheet and shroud,  
We steer'd her toward a crimson  
cloud

That landlike slept along the deep.

### CIII

THE time draws near the birth of  
Christ;

The moon is hid, the night is still;  
A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
That wakens at this hour of rest  
A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
In lands where not a memory  
strays,  
Nor landmark breathes of other  
days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

### CIV

TO-NIGHT ungather'd let us leave  
This laurel, let this holly stand:  
We live within the stranger's land,  
And strangely falls our Christmas  
eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
And silent under other snows:  
There in due time the woodbine  
blows,  
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
The genial hour with mask and  
mime;  
For change of place, like growth  
of time,  
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
By which our lives are chiefly  
proved,  
A little spare the night I loved,  
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm:  
For who would keep an ancient  
form  
Thro' which the spirit breathes no  
more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;  
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be  
blown;  
No dance, no motion, save alone  
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
 Long sleeps the summer in the  
 seed ;  
 Run out your measured arcs, and  
 lead  
 The closing cycle rich in good.

## cv

RING out wild bells to the wild sky  
 The flying cloud, the frosty light :  
 The year is dying in the night ;  
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
 The year is going, let him go ;  
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
 For those that here we see no  
 more ;

Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
 And ancient forms of party strife ;  
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
 The faithless coldness of the times ;  
 Ring out, ring out my mournful  
 rhymes,  
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and  
 blood,  
 The civic slander and the spite ;  
 Ring in the love of truth and right,  
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;  
 Ring out the narrowing lust of  
 gold ;  
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
 Ring out the darkness of the land,  
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## cvI

IT is the day when he was born,  
 A bitter day that early sank  
 Behind a purple-frosty bank  
 Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely  
 flies  
 The blast of North and East, and  
 ice  
 Makes daggers at the sharpen'd  
 eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and  
 thorns  
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
 Above the wood which grides and  
 clangs  
 Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
 To darken on the rolling brine  
 That breaks the coast. But fetch  
 the wine,  
 Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
 To make a solid core of heat ;  
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
 Of all things ev'n as he were by ;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
 With books and music, surely we  
 Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
 And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## cvII

I will not shut me from my kind,  
 And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
 I will not eat my heart alone,  
 Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

What profit lies in barren faith,  
 And vacant yearning, tho' with  
 might  
 To scale the heaven's highest  
 height,  
 Or dive below the wells of Death ?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting  
hymns ?  
And on the depths of death there  
swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies :  
"Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## CVIII

HEART-AFFLUENCE in discursive talk  
From household fountains never  
dry ;

The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw thro' all the Muscs' walk.

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of  
man ;

Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom ;  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England ; not the schoolboy  
heat,

The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace  
In such a sort, the child would  
twine

A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face ;

All those have been, and thee mine  
eyes

Have look'd on : if they look'd in  
vain,

My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CIX

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
The man of rath and riper years :  
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
The proud was half disarm'd of  
pride,  
Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert  
by,  
The flippant put himself to school  
And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;  
And loved them more, that they  
were thine,  
The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Not mine the sweetness or the skill,  
But mine the love that will not  
tire,  
And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will.

## CX

The churl in spirit, up or down  
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
To him who grasps a golden ball,  
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
His want in forms for fashion's  
sake,  
Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons thro' the gilded pale : .

For who can always act ? but he,  
To whom a thousand memories call,  
Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and  
join'd  
Each office of the social hour  
To noble manners, as the flower  
And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
Or villain fancy fiteting by,  
Drew in the expression of an eye,  
Where God and Nature met in  
light ;

And thus he bore without abuse  
The grand old name of gentleman,  
Defamed by every charlatan,  
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

## cxii

HIGH wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
That I, who gaze with temperate  
eyes

On glorious insufficiencies,  
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
Of all my love, art reason why  
I seem to cast a careless eye "  
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou ? some novel  
power  
Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
And hope could never hope too  
much,  
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
And tracts of calm from tempest  
made,  
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

## cxiii

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ;  
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with  
thee

Which not alone had guided me,  
But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt, who knew thee  
keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—

I doubt not what thou wouldest have  
been :

A life of civic action warm,  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
Becoming, when the time has birth,  
A lever to uplift the earth  
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and  
go,  
With agonies, with energies,  
With overthrowings, and with  
cries,  
And undulations to and fro

## cxiv

WHO loves not Knowledge ? Who  
shall rail  
Against her beauty ? May she mix  
With men and prosper ! Who shall  
fix  
Her pillars ? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :  
She sets her forward countenance  
And leaps into the future chance,  
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—  
She cannot fight the fear of death,  
What is she, cut from love and faith,  
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons ? fiery-hot to burst  
All barriers in her onward race  
For power. Let her know her  
place ;  
She is second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain ; and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With wisdom, like the younger child :

For she is earthly of the mind,  
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like  
thee,  
Who growest not alone in power  
And knowledge, but by year and  
hour  
In reverence and in charity.

## CXIV

Now fades the last long streak of  
snow,  
Now burgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and  
thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and  
long,  
The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And drown'd in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and  
lea,  
The flocks are whiter down the  
valc,  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or  
dives  
In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
The happy birds, that change their  
sky

To build and brood; that live their  
lives

From land to land; and in my breast  
Spring wakens too; and my regret  
Becomes an April violet,  
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

## CXV

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
And meets the year, and gives and  
takes  
The colours of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,  
The life re-orient out of dust,  
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine  
Upon me, while I muse alone;  
And that dear voice, I once have  
known,  
Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
For days of happy commune  
dead;  
Less yearning for the friendship  
fled,  
Than some strong bond which is to  
be.

## CXVI

O DAYS and hours, your work is  
this,  
To hold me from my proper place,  
A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss:

That out of distance might ensue  
Desire of nearness doubly sweet;  
And unto meeting when we meet,  
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
And every span of shade that steals,  
And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.

## CXVII

CONTEMPLATE all this work of Time,  
The giant labouring in his youth;  
Nor dream of human love and  
truth,  
As dying Nature's earth and lime;  
But trust that those we call the dead  
Are breathers of an ampler day  
For ever nobler ends. They say,  
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random  
forms,  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man;

Who threw and branch'd from clime  
to clime,  
The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place,  
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;  
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and  
show  
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dip'd in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;  
Move upward, working out the  
beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

## cxviii

DOORS, where my heart was used to  
beat

So quickly, not as one that weeps  
I come once more ; the city sleeps ;  
I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see  
Betwixt the black fronts long-  
withdrawn

A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland  
And bright the friendship of thine  
eye ;

And in my thoughts with scarce a  
sigh

I take the pressure of thine hand.

## cxix

I TRUST I have not wasted breath :  
I think we are not wholly brain,  
Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,  
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with  
Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :  
Let Science prove we are, and then  
What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
His action like the greater ape,  
But I was born to other things.

## cxx

SAD Hesper o'er the buried sun  
And ready, thou, to die with him,  
Thou watchest all things over dim  
And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
The boat is drawn upon the shore ;  
Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the  
night,  
By thee the world's great work is  
heard  
Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;  
Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,  
And voices hail it from the brink ;  
Thou hear'st the village hammer  
clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double  
name  
For what is one, the first, the last,  
Thou, like my present and my  
past,  
Thy place is changed ; thou art the  
same.

## cxxi

Our, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
While I rose up against my doom,  
And yearn'd to burst the folded  
gloom,

To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul,  
In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
Divide us not, be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flush of joy,  
I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
And every dew-drop paints a bow,  
The wizard Lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose,

## cxxxii

THERE rolls the deep where grew the tree.

O earth, what changes thou hast seen !

There where the long street roars, hath been

The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow From form to form, and nothing stands ;

They melt like mist, the solid lands,

Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell, And dream my dream, and hold it true ;

For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,

I cannot think the thing farewell.

## cxxxiii

THAT which we dare invoke to bless ; Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest doubt ;

He, They, One, All ; within, without ;

The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun, Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ; Nor thro' the questions men may try,

The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep, I heard a voice " believe no more "

And heard an ever-breaking shore That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt

The freezing reason's colder part, And like a man in wrath the heart

Stood up and answer'd " I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear : But that blind clamour made me wise ;

Then was I as a child that cries, But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I am beheld again What is, and no man understands ; And out of darkness came the hands

That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

## cxxxiv

WHATEVER I have said or sung, Some bitter notes my harp would give,

Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live

A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ; She did but look through dimmer eyes ;

Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,

Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care, He breathed the spirit of the song ;

And if the words were sweet and strong

He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail To seek thee on the mystic deeps, And this electric force, that keeps A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

## cxxxv

Love is and was my Lord and King.

And in his presence I attend

To hear the tidings of my friend, Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,

And will be, tho' as yet I keep

Within his court on earth, and sleep Encompass'd by his faithful guard.

And hear at times a sentinel  
Who moves about from place to  
place,  
And whispers to the worlds of space,  
In the deep night, that all is well.

## CXXVI

AND all is well, tho' faith and form  
Be sunder'd in the night of tear ;  
Well roars the storm to those that  
hear

A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
And him, the lazar, in his rags :  
They tremble, the sustaining crags ;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;  
The fortress crashes from on high,  
The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
And the great *Æon* sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;  
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well.

## CXXVII

THE love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade ;  
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and  
Fear,

If all your office had to do  
With old results that look like  
new ;

If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
To fool the crowd with glorious  
lies,

To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
To cramp the student at his desk,  
To make old barenness picturesque  
And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well de-  
scend

On you and yours. I see in part  
That all, as in some piece of art,  
Is toil cœperant to an end.

## CXXVIII

DEAR friend, far off, my lost desire,  
So far, so near in woe and weal ;  
O loved the most, when most I feel  
There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown ; human,  
divine ;  
Sweet human hand and lips and  
eye ;  
Dear heavenly friend that canst not  
die

Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine ;

Strange friend, past, present, and to  
be ;

Loved deeper, darklier under-  
stood ;

Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
And mingle all the world with thee.

## CXXIX

THY voice is on the rolling air ;  
I hear thee where the waters run ;  
Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot  
guess ;

But tho' I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before ;  
My love is vaster passion now ;  
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature  
thou,

I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;  
I have thee still, and I rejoice ;  
I prosper, circled with thy voice ;  
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

## cxxx

O LIVING will that shalt endure  
When all that seems shall suffer  
shock,  
Rise in the spiritual rock,  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them  
pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
A voice as unto him that hears,  
A cry above the conquer'd years  
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,  
The truths that never can be  
proved  
Until we close with all we loved,  
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O TRUE and tried, so well and long,  
Demand not thou a marriage lay ;  
In that it is thy marriage day  
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
Since first he told me that he loved  
A daughter of our house ; nor  
proved

Since that dark day a day like this ;  
Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
Some thrice three years : they went  
and came,  
Remade the blood and changed  
the frame,  
And yet is love not less, but more ;

No longer caring to embalm  
In dying songs a dead regret,  
But like a statue solid-set,  
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
Than in the summers that are  
flown,  
For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
As echoes out of weaker times,  
As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
That must be made a wife ere  
noon ?

She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
And then on thee ; they meet thy  
look  
And brighten like the star that  
shook

Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,  
He too foretold the perfect rose.  
For thee she grew, for thee she  
grows  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;  
As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent ; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,  
And I must give away the bride ;  
She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear :

For I that danced her on my knee,  
That watch'd her on her nurse's  
arm,  
That shielded all her life from harm  
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;  
Their pensive tablets round her  
head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The "wilt thou" answer'd, and  
again  
The "wilt thou" ask'd, till out of  
twain  
Her sweet "I will" has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be  
read,  
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
By village eyes as yet unborn ;  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering  
breeze ;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the  
trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them—maidens of the  
place,  
That peit us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave.  
They leave the porch, they pass the  
grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
For them the light of life increased,  
Who stay to share the morning  
feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
To meet and greet a whiter sun ;  
My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
And hearts are warm'l and faces  
bloom,  
As drinking health to bride and  
groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
Perchance, perchance, among the  
rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
And those white-favour'd horses  
wait ;  
They rise, but linger ; it is late ;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
From little cloudlets on the grass,  
But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
And talk of others that are wed,  
And how she look'd, and what he  
said,  
And back we came at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
The shade of passing thought, the  
wealth  
Of words and wit, the double  
health,  
The crowning cup, the three-times-  
three,

And last the dance ;—till I retire :  
Dumb is that tower which spake  
so loud,  
And high in heaven the streaming  
cloud,

And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
Till over down and over dale  
All night the shining vapour sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing  
rills,  
And catch at every mountain head,  
And o'er the friths that branch and  
spread  
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal  
doors,  
With tender gloom the roof, the  
wall ;  
And breaking lot the splendour  
fall  
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
And, star and system rolling past,  
A soul shall draw from out the  
vast  
And strike his being into bounds.

And, moved thro' life of lower phaso,  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge, under whose command  
Is Earth and Faith's, and in their  
hand  
Is Nature like an open book,  
No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought and loved and  
did,  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but  
seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit,  
Whereof the man, that with me  
trod  
This planet, was a noble type  
Appearing ere the times were  
ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in  
God,  
That God, which ever lives and  
loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

# MAUD, AND OTHER POEMS

## MAUD

### PART I

#### I

#### I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind  
the little wood,  
Its lips in the field above are dabbled  
with blood-red heath,  
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a  
silent horror of blood,  
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd  
her, answers "Death."

#### II

For there in the ghastly pit long since  
a body was found,  
His who had given me life—O father !  
O God ! was it well ?—  
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd,  
and dinted into the ground :  
There yet lies the rock that fell with  
him when he fell.

#### III

Did he fling himself down ? who  
knows ? for a vast speculation  
had fail'd,  
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd,  
and ever wann'd with despair,  
And out he walk'd when the wind  
like a broken worldling wail'd,  
And the flying gold of the ruin'd  
woodlands drove thro' the air.

#### IV

I remember the time, for the roots of  
my hair were stirr'd  
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight  
trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,  
And my pulses closed their gates with  
a shock on my heart as I heard  
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother  
divide the shuddering night.

#### V

Villainy somewhere ! whose ? One  
says, we are villains all.  
Not he : his honest fame should at  
least by me be maintain'd :  
But that old man, now lord of the  
broad estate and the Hall,  
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that  
had left us flaccid and drain'd.

#### VI

Why do they prize of the blessings of  
Peace ? we have made them a  
curse,  
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for  
all that is not its own ;  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain,  
is it better or worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing  
in war on his own hearthstone ?

#### VII

But these are the days of advance,  
the works of the men of mind,  
When who but a fool would have  
faith in a tradesman's ware or  
his word ?  
Is it peace or war ? Civil war, as I  
think, and that of a kind  
The viler, as underhand, not openly  
bearing the sword.

#### VIII

Sooner or later I too may passively  
take the print  
Of the golden age—why not ? I  
have neither hope nor trust ;  
May make my heart as a millstone,  
set my face as a flint,  
Cheat and be cheated, and die : who  
knows ? we are ashes and dust.

## IX

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by, When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine,

When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie, Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges the wine.

## X

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruskin's head, Till the filthy by lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife, While chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread. And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

## XI

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centie bits Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights, While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits To pebble a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights

## XII

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee, And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones, Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea, War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

## XIII

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill, And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,

That the smoothfaced snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter and till And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home —

## xiv

What 'am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood? Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's he?

## xv

Would there be sorrow for me? there was *love* in the passionate shriek, Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave— Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave

## xvi

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here? O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain, Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

## xvii

Workmen up at the Hall!—they are coming back from abroad, The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud, I play'd with the girl when a child, she promised then to be fair.

## XVIII

Maud with her venturesous climbings  
and tumbles and childish es-  
capes,  
Maud the delight of the village, the  
ringing joy of the Hall,  
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth  
when my father dangled the  
grapes,  
Maud the beloved of my mother, the  
moon-faced darling of all,—

## XIX

What is she now? My dreams are  
bad. She may bring me a  
curse,  
No, there is fainter game on the moor ;  
she will let me alone.  
Thanks, for the fiend best knows  
whether woman or man be the  
worse.  
I will bury myself in my books, and  
the Devil may pipe to his own.

## II

LONG have I sigh'd for a calm : God  
grant I may find it at last !  
It will never be broken by Maud, she  
has neither savour nor salt,  
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I  
found when her carriage past,  
Perfectly beautiful : let it be granted  
her : where is the fault?  
All that I saw (for her eyes were down-  
cast, not to be seen)  
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splen-  
didly null,  
Dead perfection, no more ; nothing  
more, if it had not been  
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an  
hour's defect of the rose,  
Or an underlip, you may call it a little  
too ripe, too full,  
Or the least little delicate aquiline  
curve in a sensitive nose,  
From which I escaped heart-free,  
with the least little touch of  
spleen.

## III

COLD and clear-cut face, why come  
you so cruelly meek,  
Breaking a slumber in which all  
spleenful folly was drown'd,  
Pale with the golden beam of an  
eyelash dead on the cheek,  
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-  
sweet on a gloom profound ;  
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep  
for a transient wrong  
Done but in thought to your beauty,  
and ever as pale as before  
Growing and fading and growing upon  
me without a sound,  
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, death-  
like, half the night long  
Growing and fading and growing, till  
I could bear it no more,  
But arose, and all by myself in my  
own dark garden ground,  
Listening now to the tide in its  
broad-flung ship-wrecking roar,  
Now to the scream of a madden'd  
beach dragg'd down by the wave,  
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly  
glimmer, and found  
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion  
low in his grave.

## IV

## I

A MILLION emeralds break from the  
ruby-budded lime  
In the little grove where I sit—ah,  
wherefore cannot I be  
Like things of the season gay, like  
the bountiful season bland,  
When the far-off sail is blown by the  
breeze of a softer clime,  
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of  
a crescent of sea,  
The silent sapphire-spangled mar-  
riage ring of the land ?

## II

Below me, there, is the village, and  
looks how quiet and small !  
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with  
gossip, scandal, and spite ;

And Jack on his ale-house bench has  
as many lies as a Czar ;  
And here on the landward side, by  
a red rock, glimmers the Hall ;  
And up in the high Hall-garden I see  
her pass like a light ;  
But sorrow seize me if ever that light  
be my leading star !

## III

When have I bow'd to her father,  
the wrinkled head of the race ?  
I met her to-day with her brother,  
but not to her brother I bow'd ;  
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode  
by on the moor ;  
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd  
over her beautiful face.  
O child, you wrong your beauty,  
believe it, in being so proud ;  
Your father has wealth well-gatten,  
and I am nameless and poor.

## IV

I keep but a man and a maid, ever  
ready to slander and steal ;  
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile,  
like a stoic, or like  
A wiser epicurean, and let the world  
have its way :  
For nature is one with rapine, a harm  
no preacher can heal ;  
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow,  
the sparrow spear'd by the  
shrike,  
And the whole little wood where I  
sit is a world of plunder and  
prey.

## V

We are puppets, Man in his pride,  
and Beauty fair in her flower ;  
Do we move ourselves, or are moved  
by an unseen hand at a game  
That pushes us off from the board,  
and others ever succeed ?  
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each  
other here for an hour ;  
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle,  
and grin at a brother's shame ;  
However we brave it out, we men  
are a little breed.

## VI

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord  
and Master of Earth,  
For him did his high sun flame, and  
his river billowing ran,  
And he felt himself in his force to be  
Nature's crowning race.  
As nine months go to the shaping an  
infant ripe for his birth,  
So many a million of ages have gone  
to the making of man :  
He now is first, but is he the last ? is  
he not too base ?

## VII

The man of science himself is fonder  
of glory, and vain,  
An eye well-practised in nature, a  
spirit bounded and poor ;  
The passionate heart of the poet is  
whirl'd into folly and vice.  
I would not marvel at either, but  
keep a temperate brain ;  
For not to desire or admire, if a man  
could learn it, were more  
Than to walk all day like the sultan  
of old in a garden of spice.

## VIII

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an  
Isis hid by the veil.  
Who knows the ways of the world,  
how God will bring them about ?  
Our planet is one, the suns are many,  
the world is wide.  
Shall I weep if a Poland fall ? shall I  
shriek if a Hungary fail ?  
Or an infant civilisation be ruled  
with rod or with knout ?  
I have not made the world, and He  
that made it will guide.

## IX

Be mine a philosopher's life in the  
quiet woodland ways,  
Where if I cannot be gay a passion-  
less peace be my lot,  
Far-off from the clamour of liars  
belied in the hubbub of lies ;

From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise

Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not, Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

## X

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love, The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.

Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife. Your mother is mute in her grave as her image is marble above ; Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will ; You have but fed on the roses, and lain in the lilies of life.

## V

## I

A voice by the cedar tree, In the meadow under the Hall ! She is singing an air that is known to me,

A passionate ballad gallant and gay, A martial song like a trumpet's call ! Singing alone in the morning of life, In the happy morning of life and of May,

Singing of men that in battle array, Ready in heart and ready in hand, March with banner and bugle and fife

To the death, for their native land.

## II

Maud with her exquisite face, And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,

And feet like sunny gems on an English green,

Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,

Singing of Death, and of Honour that cannot die,

Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,

And myself so languid and base.

## III

Silence, beautiful voice ! Be still, for you only trouble the mind With a joy in which I cannot rejoice, A glory I shall not find. Still ! I will hear you no more, For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice

But to move to the meadow and fall before Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore, Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind, Not her, not her, but a voice.

## VI

## I

MORNING arises stormy and pale, No sun, but a wannish glare In fold upon fold of lucless cloud, And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd Caught and cuff'd by the gale : I had fancied it would be fair.

## II

Whom but Maud should I meet Last night, when the sunset burn'd On the blossom'd gable-ends At the head of the village street, Whom but Maud should I meet ? And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet She made me divine amends For a courtesy not return'd.

## III

And thus a delicate spark Of glowing and growing light Thro' the livelong hours of the dark Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams, Ready to burst in a colour'd flame ; Till at last when the morning came In a cloud, it faded, and seems But an ashen-gray delight.

## IV

What if with her sunny hair,  
And smile as sunny as cold,  
She meant to weave me a snare  
Of some coquettish deceit,  
Cleopatra-like as of old  
To entangle me when we met,  
To have her lion roll in a silken net  
And fawn at a victor's feet.

## V

Ah, what shall I be at fifty  
Should Nature keep me alive,  
If I find the world so bitter  
When I am but twenty-five ?  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile were all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

## VI

What if tho' her eye seem'd full  
Of a kind intent to me,  
What if that dandy-despot, he,  
That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull  
Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,  
Who wants the finer politic sense  
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—  
What if he had told her yestermorn  
How prettily for his own sweet sake  
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
That so, when the rotten hustings  
shake  
In another month to his brazen lies,  
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

## VII

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,  
Keep watch and ward, keep watch  
and ward,  
Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
Yea too, myself from myself I guard,  
For often a man's own angry pride  
Is cap and bells for a fool.

## VIII

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
Came out of her pitying womanhood.  
For am I not, am I not, here alone  
So many a summer since she died,  
My mother, who was so gentle and  
good ?  
Living alone in an empty house,  
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
Where I hear the dead at midday  
moan,  
And the shrieking rush of the wain-  
scot mouse,  
And my own sad name in corners  
cried,  
When the shiver of dancing leaves is  
thrown  
About its echoing chambers wide,  
Till a morbid hate and horror have  
grown  
Of a world in which I have hardly  
mixt,  
And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

## IX

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and  
caught  
By that you swore to withstand ?  
For what was it else within me  
wrought  
But, I fear, the new strong wine of  
love,  
That made my tongue so stammer  
and trip  
When I saw the treasured splendour,  
her hand,  
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
And the sunlight broke from her lip ?

## X

I have play'd with her when a child ;  
She remembers it now we meet.  
Ah well, well, well, I may be beguiled  
By some coquettish deceit.  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

## VII

I

DID I hear it half in a doze  
 Long since, I know not where ?  
 Did I dream it an hour ago,  
 When asleep in this arm-chair ?

## II

Men were drinking together,  
 Drinking and talking of me ;  
 " Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
 Will have plenty : so let it be."

## III

Is it an echo of something  
 Read with a boy's delight,  
 Viziers nodding together  
 In some Arabian night ?

## IV

Strange, that I hear two mon,  
 Somewhere, talking of me ;  
 " Well, if it prove a girl, my boy  
 Will have plenty : so let it be."

## VIII

SHE came to the village church,  
 And sat by a pillar alone ;  
 An angel watching an urn  
 Wept over her, carved in stone ;  
 And once, but once, she lifted her  
 eyes,  
 And suddenly, sweetly, strangely  
 blush'd  
 To find they were met by my own ;  
 And suddenly, sweetly, my heart  
 beat stronger  
 And thicker, until I heard no longer  
 The snowy-banded dilettante,  
 Delicate-handed priest intone ;  
 And thought, is it pride, and mused  
 and sigh'd  
 " No surely, now it cannot be pride."

## IX

I WAS walking a mile,  
 More than a mile from the shore,  
 The sun look'd out with a smile  
 Betwixt the cloud and the moor,

And riding at set of day  
 Over the dark moor land,  
 Rapidly riding far away,  
 She waved to me with her hand.  
 There were two at her side,  
 Something flash'd in the sun,  
 Down by the hill I saw them ride,  
 In a moment they were gone :  
 Like a sudden spark  
 Struck vainly in the night,  
 And back returns the dark  
 With no more hope of light.

## X

I

SICK, am I sick of a jealous dread ?  
 Was not one of the two at her side  
 This new-made lord, whose splendour  
 plucks  
 The slavish hat from the villager's  
 head ?  
 Whose old grand-father has lately  
 died,  
 Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
 Grinny nakedness dragging his trucks  
 And laying his trams in a poison'd  
 gloom  
 Wrought, till he crept from a gutted  
 mine  
 Master of half a servile shire,  
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
 To a grandson, first of his noble  
 line,  
 Rich in the grace all women desire,  
 Strong in the power that all men  
 adore,  
 And simper and set their voices lower,  
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work  
 divine,  
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
 New as his title, built last year,  
 Thero amid perky larches and pine,  
 And over the sullen-purple moor  
 (Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

## II

What, has he found my jewel out ?  
 For one of the two that rode at her  
 side  
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he :

Bound for the Hall, and I think for  
a bride.  
Blithe would her brother's acceptance  
be.  
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,  
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
A bought commission, a waxen face,  
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—  
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?  
And therefore splenetic, personal,  
base,  
A wounded thing with a rancorous  
cry,  
At war with myself and a wretched  
race,  
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

She would not do herself this great  
wrong,  
To take a wanton dissolute boy  
For a man and leader of men.

v

Ali God, for a man with heart, head,  
hand,  
Like some of the simple great ones  
gone  
For ever and ever by,  
One still strong man in a blatant  
land,  
Whatever they call him, what care I,  
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one  
Who can rule and dare not lie.

## III

Last week came one to the county  
town,  
To preach our poor little army down,  
And play the game of the despot  
kings,  
Tho' the state has done it and thrice  
as well:  
This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy  
things,  
Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton,  
and rings  
Even in dreams to the chink of his  
pence,  
This huckster put down war I can he  
tell  
Whether war be a cause or a conse-  
quence?  
Put down the passions that make  
earth Hell!  
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
Jealousy, down! cut off from the  
mind  
The bitter springs of anger and fear;  
Down too, down at your own fireside,  
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
For each is at war with mankind.

## IV

I wish I could hear again  
The chivalrous battle-song  
That she warbled alone in her joy!  
I might persuade myself then

And ah for a man to arise in me,  
That the man I am may cease to be!

## VI

I

O LET the solid ground  
Not fail beneath my feet  
Before my life has found  
What some have found so sweet;  
Then let come what come may,  
What matter if I go mad,  
I shall have had my day.

## II

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
Not close and darken above me  
Before I am quite quite sure  
That there is one to love me;  
Then let come what come may  
To a life that has been so sad,  
I shall have had my day.

## XII

I

BIRDS in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling,  
Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling.

## II

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;  
And I, who else, was with her,  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together.

## III

Birds in our wood sang  
Ringing thro' the vallies,  
Maud is here, here, here  
In among the lilies.

## IV

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately ;  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.

## V

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favour !  
O Maud were sure of Heaven  
If lowliness could save her.

## VI

I know the way she went  
Home with her maiden posy,  
For her feet have touch'd the meadows  
And left the daisies rosy.

## VII

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
Were crying and calling to her,  
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud,  
One is come to woo her.  
Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charley snarling,  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling.

## XIII

## I

SCORN'D, to be scorn'd by one that  
I scorn,  
Is that a matter to make me fret ?  
That a calamity hard to be borne ?  
Well, he may live to hate me yet.

Fool that I am to be vexed with his  
pride !

I past him, I was crossing his lands ;  
He stood on the path a little aside ;  
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red  
and white,  
And six feet two, as I think, he  
stands ;  
But his essences turn'd the live air  
sick,  
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his  
hands.

## II

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,  
I long'd so heartily then and there  
To give him the grasp of fellowship ;  
But while I past he was humming  
an air,  
Stop! and then with a riding whip  
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
And curving a contumelious lip,  
Gorgonised me from head to foot  
With a stony British stare.

## III

Why sits he here in his father's chair ?  
That old man never comes to his  
place :  
Shall I believe him ashamed to be  
seen ?  
For only once, in the village street,  
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his  
face,  
A gray old wolf and a lean.  
Scarcely, now, would I call him a  
cheat ;  
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
She might by a true descent be untrue ;  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet :  
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
To the sweeter blood by the other  
side ;  
Her mother has been a thing com-  
plete,  
However she came to be so allied.  
And fair without, faithful within,  
Maud to him is nothing akin :  
Some peculiar mystic grace

Made her only the child of her  
mother,  
And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
All, all upon the brother.

## IV

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !  
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

## XIV

## I

MAUD has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn ;  
There she walks in her state,  
And tends upon bed and bower ;  
And thither I climb'd at dawn  
And stood by her garden-gate ;  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

## II

Maud's own little oak-room  
(Which Maud, like a precious stone  
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
Lights with herself, when alone  
She sits by her music and books,  
And her brother lingers late  
With a roystering company) looks  
Upon Maud's own garden-gate :  
And I thought as I stood, if a hand  
as white  
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
On the hasp of the window, and my  
Delight  
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious  
ghost, to glide,  
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven,  
down to my side,  
There were but a step to be made.

## III

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
And again seem'd overbold ;  
Now I thought that she cared for me,  
Now I thought she was kind  
Only because she was cold.

## IV

I heard no sound where I stood  
But the rivulet on from the lawn  
Running down to my own dark  
wood ;  
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as  
it swell'd  
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;  
But I look'd, and round, all round  
the house I beheld  
The death-white curtain drawn ;  
Felt a horror over me creep,  
Prickle my skin and catch my  
breath,  
Knew that the death-white curtain  
meant but sleep,  
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a  
fool of the sleep of death.

## XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
And I make myself such evil cheer,  
That if I be dear to some one else,  
Then some one else may have much  
to fear ;  
But if I be dear to some one else,  
Then I should be to myself more  
dear.  
Shall I not take care of all that I  
think,  
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,  
If I be dear,  
If I be dear to some one else.

## XVI

## I

This lump of earth has left his estate  
The lighter by the loss of his weight ;  
And so that he find what he went to  
seek,  
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and  
drown  
His heart in the gross mud-honey of  
town,  
He may stay for a year who has gone  
for a week :  
But this is the day when I must speak,  
And I see my Oread coming down,  
O this is the day !  
O beautiful creature, what am I  
That I dare to look her way ;  
Think I may hold dominion sweet,

Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,  
And dream of her beauty with tender dread,  
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet  
To the grace that, bright and light as the crest  
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,  
To know her beauty might half undo it.  
I know it the one bright thing to save  
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,  
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,  
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

## II

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,  
Dare I bid her abide by her word?  
Should I love her so well if she  
Had given her word to a thing so low?  
Shall I love her as well if she  
Can break her word were it even for me?  
I trust that it is not so.

## III

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,  
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,  
For I must tell her before we part,  
I must tell her, or die.

## XVII

Go not, happy day,  
From the shining fields,  
Go not, happy day,  
Till the maiden yields.  
Rosy is the West,  
Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
And a rose her mouth.  
When the happy Yes  
Faltered from her lips,

Pass and blush the news  
O'er the blowing ships.  
Over blowing seas,  
Over seas at rest,  
Pass the happy news,  
Blush it thro' the West;  
Till the red man dance  
By his red cedar tree,  
And the red man's babe  
Leap, beyond the sea.  
Blush from West to East,  
Blush from East to West,  
Till the West is East,  
Blush it thro' the West.  
Rosy is the West,  
Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
And a rose her mouth.

## XVIII

## I

I HAVE led her home, my love, my only friend.  
There is none like her, none.  
And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
And sweetly, on and on  
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

## II

None like her, none.  
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk  
Seen'd her light foot along the garden walk,  
And shook my heart to think she comes once more;  
But even then I heard her close the door,  
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

## III

There is none like her, none.  
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.  
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon

In the long breeze that streams to  
thy delicious East,  
Sighing for Lebanon,  
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here  
increased,  
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
And looking to the South, and fed  
With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
And haunted by the starry head  
Of her whose gentle will has changed  
my fate,  
And made my life a perfumed altar-  
flame ;  
And over whom thy darkness must  
have spread  
With such delight as theirs of old,  
thy great  
Forfathers of the thornless garden,  
there  
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from  
whom she came.

## IV

Here will I lie, while these long  
branches sway,  
And you fair stars that crown a happy  
day  
Go in and out as if at merry play,  
Who am no more so all forlorn,  
As when it seem'd far better to be  
born  
To labour and the mattock-harden'd  
hand,  
Than nursed at ease and brought to  
understand  
A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron  
skies,  
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
Cold fires, yet with power to burn  
and brand  
His nothingness into man.

## V

But now shine on, and what care I,  
Who in this stormy gulf have found  
a pearl  
The countercharm of space and  
hollow sky,  
And do accept my madness, and  
would die  
To save from some slight shame one  
simple girl.

VI  
Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death  
may give  
More life to Love than is or ever was  
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet  
to live.  
Let no one ask me how it came  
to pass ;  
It seems that I am happy, that to  
me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the  
grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

## VII

Not die ; but live a life of truest  
breath,  
And teach true life to fight with mor-  
tal wrongs.  
O, why should Love, like men in  
drinking-songs,  
Spice his fair banquet with the dust  
of death ?  
Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
Maud made my Maud by that long  
lover's kiss,  
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer  
this ?  
" The dusky strand of Death inwoven  
here  
With dear Love's tie, makes Love  
himself more dear "

## VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the  
swell  
Of the long waves that roll in yonder  
bay ?  
And hark the clock within, the silver  
knell  
Of twelve sweet hours that past in  
bridal white,  
And died to live, long as my pulses  
play ;  
But now by this my love has closed  
her sight  
And given false death her hand, and  
stol'n away  
To dreamful wastes where footless  
fancies dwell  
Among the fragments of the golden  
day.

May nothing there her maiden grace  
affright !  
Dear heart, I feel with thee the  
drowsy spell.  
My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
My own heart's heart and ownest own  
farewell ;  
It is but for a little space I go :  
And ye meanwhile far over moor and  
fell  
Beat to the noiseless music of the  
night !  
Has our whole earth gone nearer to  
the glow  
Of your soft splendours that you look  
so bright ?  
*I* have climb'd nearer out of lonely  
Hell.  
Beat, happy stars, timing with things,  
below,  
Beat with my heart more blest than  
heart can tell,  
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent  
woe  
That seems to draw—but it shall not  
be so :  
Let all be well, be well.

## XIX

## I

HER brother is coming back to-night,  
Breaking up my dream of delight.

## II

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?  
I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
O when did a morning shine  
So rich in atonement as this  
For my dark-dawning youth,  
Darken'd watching a mother decline  
And that dead man at her heart and  
mine :  
For who was left to watch her but I ?  
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

## III

I trust that I did not talk  
To gentle Maud in our walk  
(For often in lonely wanderings  
I have cursed him even to lifeless  
things)

But I trust that I did not talk,  
Not touch on her father's sin :  
I am sure I did but speak  
Of my mother's faded cheek  
When it slowly grew so thin,  
That I felt she was slowly dying  
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with  
debt :  
For how often I caught her with eyes  
all wet,  
Shaking her head at her son and  
sighing  
A world of trouble within !

## IV

And Maud too, Maud was moved  
To speak of the mother she loved  
As one scarce less forlorn,  
Dying abroad and it seems apart  
From him who had ceased to share  
her heart,  
And ever mourning over the feud,  
The household fury sprinkled with  
blood  
By which our houses are torn :  
How strange was what she said,  
When only Maud and the brother  
Hung over her dying bed—  
That Maud's dark father and mine  
Had bound us one to the other,  
Betrothed us over their wine,  
On the day when Maud was born ;  
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet  
breath.  
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till  
death,  
Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

## V

But the true blood spilt had in it a  
heat  
To dissolve the precious seal on a  
bond,  
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so  
sweet :  
And none of us thought of a some-  
thing beyond,  
A desire that awoke in the heart of  
the child,  
As it were a duty done to the tomb,  
To be friends for her sake, to be  
reconciled ;  
And I was cursing them and my doom,

And letting a dangerous thought  
run wild  
While often abroad in the fragrant  
gloom  
Of foreign churches—I see her there,  
Bright English lily, breathing a  
prayer  
To be friends, to be reconciled !

## VI

But then what a flint is he !  
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,  
I find whenever she touch'd on me  
This brother had laugh'd her down,  
And at last, when each came home,  
He had darken'd into a frown,  
Chid her, and forbid her to speak  
To me, her friend of the years before ;  
And this was what had redden'd her  
cheek  
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

## VII

Yet Maud, altho' not blind  
To the faults of his heart and mind,  
I see she cannot but love him,  
And says he is rough but kind,  
And wishes me to approve him,  
And tells me, when she lay  
Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
That he left his wine and horses and  
play,  
Sat with her, read to her, night and  
day,  
And tended her like a nurse.

## VIII

Kind ? but the deathbed desire  
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—  
Rough but kind ? yet I know  
He has plotted against me in this,  
That he plots against me still.  
Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.  
Well, rough but kind ; why, let it  
be so :  
For shall not Maud have her will ?

## IX

For, Maud, so tender and true,  
As long as my life endures  
I feel I shall owe you a debt,  
That I never can hope to pay ;

And if ever I should forget  
That I owe this debt to you  
And for your sweet sake to yours ;  
O then, what then shall I say ?—  
If ever I *should* forget,  
May God make me more wretched  
Than ever I have been yet !

## X

So now I have sworn to bury  
All this dead body of hate,  
I feel so free and so clear  
By the loss of that dead weight,  
That I should grow light-headed, I  
fear,  
Fantastically merry ;  
But that her brother comes, like a  
blight  
On my fresh hope, to the Hall  
to-night.

## XX

## I

STRANGE, that I felt so gay,  
Strange, that I tried to-day  
To beguile her melancholy :  
The Sultan, as we name him,—  
She did not wish to blame him—  
But he vext her and perplext her  
With his worldly talk and folly :  
Was it gentle to reprove her  
For stealing out of view  
From a little lazy lover  
Who but claims her as his due ?  
Or for chilling his caresses  
By the coldness of her manners,  
Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?  
Now I know her but in two,  
Nor can pronounce upon it  
If one should ask me whether  
The habit, hat, and feather,  
Or the frock and gipsy bonnet  
Be the neater and completer ;  
For nothing can be sweeter  
Than maiden Maud in either.

## II

But to-morrow, if we live,  
Our ponderous squire will give  
A grand political dinner  
To half the squires near ;

And Maud will wear her jewels,  
And the bird of prey will hover,  
And the titmouse hope to win her  
With his chirrup at her ear.

## III

A grand political dinner  
To the men of many acres,  
A gathering of the Tory,  
A dinner and then a dance  
For the maids and marriage-makers,  
And every eye but mine will glance  
At Maud in all her glory.

## IV

For I am not invited,  
But, with the Sultan's pardon,  
I am all as well delighted,  
For I know her own rose-garden,  
And mean to linger in it  
Till the dancing will be over ;  
And then, oh then, come out to me  
For a minute, but for a minute,  
Come out to your own true lover,  
That your true lover may see  
Your glory also, and render  
All homage to his own darling,  
Queen Maud in all her splendour.

## XXI

RIVULET crossing my ground,  
And bringing me down from the Hall  
This garden-rose that I found,  
Forgetful of Maud and me,  
And lost in trouble and moving  
round  
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
And trying to pass to the sea ;  
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,  
My Maud has sent it by thee  
(If I read her sweet will right)  
On a blushing mission to me,  
Saying in odour and colour, " Ah,  
be  
Among the roses to-night."

## XXII

## I

COME into the garden, Maud,  
For the black bat, night, has flown.

Come into the garden, Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone ;  
And the woodbine spices are wafted  
abroad,  
And the musk of the roses blown.

## II

For a breeze of morning moves,  
And the planet of Love is on high,  
Beginning to faint in the light that  
she loves  
On a bed of daffodil sky,  
To faint in the light of the sun she  
loves,  
To faint in his light, and to die.

## III

All night have the roses heard  
The flute, violin, bassoon ;  
All night has the casement jessamine  
stirr'd  
To the dancers dancing in tune ;  
Till a silence fell with the waking  
bird,  
And a hush with the setting moon.

## IV

I said to the lily, " There is but one  
With whom she has heart to be  
gay.  
When will the dancers leave her  
alone ?  
She is weary of dance and play."  
Now half to the setting moon are  
gone,  
And half to the rising day ;  
Low on the sand and loud on the  
stone  
The last wheel echoes away.

## V

I said to the rose, " The brief night  
goes  
In babble and revel and wine.  
O young lord-lover, what sighs are  
those,  
For one that will never be thine ?  
But mine, but mine," so I swear to  
the rose,  
" For ever and ever, mine."

## VI

And the soul of the rose went into  
my blood,

As the music clash'd in the hall ;  
And long by the garden lake I stood,

For I heard your rivulet fall  
From the lake to the meadow and  
on to the wood,

Our wood, that is dearer than all ;

## VII

From the meadow your walks have  
left so sweet

That whenever a March-wind  
sighs

He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
In violets blue as your eyes,  
To the woody hollows in which we  
meet

And the valleys of Paradise.

## VIII

The slender acacia would not shake  
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;  
The white lake-blossom fell into the  
lake,

As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;  
But the rose was awake all night for  
your sake,

Knowing your promise to me ;  
The lilies and roses were all awake,  
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

## IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of  
girls,  
Come hither, the dances are  
done,  
In gloss of satin and glimmer of  
pearls,

Queen lily and rose in one ;  
Shine out, little head, sunning over  
with curls,  
To the flowers, and be their sun.

## X

There has fallen a splendid tear  
From the passion-flower at the  
gate.

She is coming, my dove, my dear ;  
She is coming, my life, my fate ;  
The red rose cries, " She is near, she  
is near ;"  
And the white rose weeps, " She  
is late ;"  
The larkspur listens, " I hear, I hear ;"  
And the lily whispers, " I wait."

## XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;  
Were it ever so airy a tread,  
My heart would hear her and beat,  
Were it earth in an earthy bed ;  
My dust would hear her and beat,  
Had I lain for a century dead ;  
Would start and tremble under her  
feet,  
And blossom in purple and red.

## PART II

## I

## I

" THE fault was mine, the fault was  
mine"—  
Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and  
still,  
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on  
the hill ?—

It is this guilty hand !—  
And there rises ever a passionate cry  
From underneath in the darkening  
land—

What is it, that has been done ?  
O dawn of Eden bright over earth  
and sky,  
The fires of Hell brake out of thy  
rising sun,

The fires of Hell and of Hate ;  
For she, sweet soul, had hardly  
spoken a word,  
When her brother ran in his rage to  
the gate,

He came with the babe-faced lord ;  
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,  
And while she wept, and I strove to  
be cool,  
He fiercely gave me the lie.

Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
And he struck me, madman, over the  
face,  
Struck me before the languid fool,  
Who was gaping and grinning by :  
Struck for himself an evil stroke ;  
Wrought for his house an irredeem-  
able woe ;  
For front to front in an hour we  
stood,  
And a million horrible bellowing  
echoes broke  
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind  
the wood,  
And thunder'd up into Heaven the  
Christless code,  
That must have life for a blow.  
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd  
to grow.  
Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?  
" The fault was mine," he whisper'd,  
" fly ! "  
Then glided out of the joyous wood  
The ghastly Wraith of one that I  
know ;  
And there rang on a sudden a passion-  
ate cry,  
A cry for a brother's blood :  
It will ring in my heart and my ears,  
till I die, till I die.

## II

Is it gone ? my pulses beat—  
What was it ? a lying trick of the  
brain ?  
Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
A shadow there at my feet,  
High over the shadowy land.  
It is gone ; and the heavens fall in a  
gentle rain,  
When they should burst and drown  
with deluging storms  
The feeble vassals of wine and anger  
and lust,  
The little hearts that know not how  
to forgive :  
Arise, my God, and strike, for we  
hold Thee just,  
Strike dead the whole weak race of  
venomous worms,  
That sting each other here in the  
dust ;  
We are not worthy to live

## II

## I

See what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,  
Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl,  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design !

## II

What is it ? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

## III

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of his house in a rainbow frill ?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world ?

## IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three-decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand !

## V

Breton, not Briton ; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear—  
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,  
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
That never came from on high  
Nor ever arose from below,  
But only moves with the moving  
eye,

Flying along the land and the main—  
Why should it look like Maud?  
Am I to be overawed  
By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain?

## VI

Back from the Breton coast,  
Sick of a nameless fear,  
Back to the dark sea-line  
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;  
An old song vexes my ear;  
But that of Lamech is mine.

## VII

For years, a measureless ill.  
For years, for ever, to part—  
But she, she would love me still;  
And as long, O God, as she  
Have a grain of love for me,  
So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
However weary, a spark of will  
Not to be trampled out.

## VIII

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
With a passion so intense  
One would think that it well  
Might drown all life in the eye,—  
That it should, by being so over-  
wrought,  
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
For a shell, or a flower, little things  
Which else would have been past by!  
And now I remember, I,  
When he lay dying there,  
I noticed one of his many rings,  
(For he had many, poor worm) and  
thought  
It is his mother's hair.

## IX

Who knows if he be dead?  
Whether I need have fled?  
Am I guilty of blood?  
However this may be,  
Comfort her, comfort her, all things  
good,  
While I am over the sea!

Let me and my passionate love go  
by,  
But speak to her all things holy and  
high,  
Whatever happen to me!  
Me and my harmful love go by;  
But come to her waking, find her  
asleep,  
Powers of the height, Powers of the  
deep,  
And comfort her tho' I die.

## III

COURAGE, poor heart of stone!  
I will not ask thee why  
Thou canst not understand  
That thou art left for ever alone:  
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—  
Or if I ask thee why,  
Care not thou to reply:  
She is but dead, and the time is at  
hand  
When thou shalt more than die.

## IV

I  
O THAT 'twere possible  
After long grief and pain  
To find the arms of my true love  
Round me once again!

## II

When I was wont to meet her  
In the silent woody places  
By the home that gave me birth,  
We stood tranced in long embraces  
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter  
Than any thing on earth.

## III

A shadow flits before me,  
Not thou, but like to thee;  
Ah Christ, that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might  
tell us  
What and where they be.

## IV

It leads me forth at evening,  
It lightly winds and steals  
In a cold white robe before me,  
When all my spirit reels  
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
And the roaring of the wheels.

## V

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies ;  
In a wakful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow,  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies.

## VI

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And a dewy splendour falls  
On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls ;  
'Tis a morning pure and sweet  
And the light and shadow fleet ;  
She is walking in the meadow,  
And the woodland echo rings ;  
In a moment we shall meet ;  
She is singing in the meadow,  
And the rivulet at her feet  
Ripples on in light and shadow  
To the ballad that she sings.

## VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
My bird with the shining head,  
My own dove with the tender eye ?  
But thererings on a sudden a passion-  
ate cry,  
There is some one dying or dead,  
And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;  
For a tumult shakes the city,  
And I wake, my dream is fled ;  
In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
Without knowledge, without pity,  
By the curtains of my bed  
That abiding phantom cold.

## VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
Mix not memory with doubt,  
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
Pass and cease to move about,  
'Tis the blot upon the brain  
That *will* show itself without.

## IX

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,  
And the yellow vapours choke  
The great city sounding wide ;  
The day comes, a dull red ball  
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
On the misty river-tide.

## X

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
I steal, a wasted frame,  
It crosses here, it crosses there,  
Thro' all that crowd confused and  
loud,  
The shadow still the same ;  
And on my heavy eyelids  
My anguish hangs like shame.

## XI

Alas for her that met me,  
That heard me softly call,  
Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall.

## XII

Would the happy spirit descend,  
From the realms of light and song,  
In the chamber or the street,  
As she looks among the blest,  
Should I fear to greet my friend  
Or to say " forgive the wrong,"  
Or to ask her, " take me, sweet,  
To the regions of thy rest ? "

## XIII

But the broad light glares and beats,  
And the shadow slits and fleets

And will not let me be ;  
 And I loathe the squares and streets,  
 And the faces that one meets,  
 Hearts with no love for me :  
 Always I long to creep  
 Into some still cavern deep,  
 There to weep, and weep, and weep  
 My whole soul out to thee.

## V

## I

DEAD, long dead,  
 Long dead !  
 And my heart is a handful of dust,  
 And the wheels go over my head,  
 And my bones are shaken with pain,  
 For into a shallow grave they are  
 thrust,  
 Only a yard beneath the street,  
 And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
 The hoofs of the horses beat,  
 Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
 With never an end to the stream of  
 passing feet,  
 Driving, hurrying, marrying, bury-  
 ing,  
 Clamour and rumble, and ringing  
 and clatter,  
 And here beneath it is all as bad,  
 For I thought the dead had peace,  
 but it is not so ;  
 To have no peace in the grave, is  
 that not sad ?  
 But up and down and to and fro,  
 Ever about me the dead men go :  
 And then to hear a dead man chatter  
 Is enough to drive one mad.

## II

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
 They cannot even bury a man ;  
 And tho' we paid our tithes in the  
 days that are gone,  
 Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was  
 read ;  
 It is that which makes us loud in  
 the world of the dead ;  
 There is none that does his work, not  
 one ;  
 A touch of their office might have  
 sufficed,

But the churchmen fain would kill  
 their church,  
 As the churches have kill'd their  
 Christ.

## III

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
 No limit to his distress ;  
 And another, a lord of all things,  
 praying  
 To his own great self, as I guess ;  
 And another, a statesman there,  
 betraying  
 His party-secret, fool, to the press ;  
 And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
 The case of his patient—all for what ?  
 To tickle the maggot born in an  
 empty head,  
 And wheedle a world that loves him  
 not,  
 For it is but a world of the dead.

## IV

Nothing but idiot gabble !  
 For the prophecy given of old  
 And then not understood,  
 Has come to pass as foretold ;  
 Not let any man think for the public  
 good,  
 But babble, merely for babble,  
 For I never whisper'd a private affair  
 Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
 No, not to myself in the closet  
 alone,  
 But I heard it shouted at once from  
 the top of the house ;  
 Everything came to be known :  
 Who told *him* we were there ?

## V

Not that gray old wolf, for he came  
 not back  
 From the wilderness, full of wolves,  
 where he used to lie ;  
 He has gather'd the bones for his  
 o'ergrown whelp to crack ;  
 Crack them now for yourself, and  
 howl, and die.

## VI

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
And curse me the British vermin,  
the rat;  
I know not whether he came in the  
Hanover ship,  
But I know that he lies and listens  
mute  
In an ancient mansion's crannies and  
holes:  
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,  
Except that now we poison our babes,  
poor souls!  
It is all used up for that.

## VII

Tell him now: she is standing here  
at my head;  
Not beautiful now, not even kind;  
He may take her now; for she never  
speaks her mind,  
But is ever the one thing silent here.  
She is not of us, as I divine;  
She comes from another stiller world  
of the dead,  
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

## VIII

But I know where a garden grows,  
Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
All made up of the lily and rose  
That blow by night, when the season  
is good,  
To the sound of dancing music and  
flutes:  
It is only flowers, they hind no fruits,  
And I almost fear they are not roses,  
but blood;  
For the keeper was one, so full of  
pride,  
He linkt a dead man there to a  
spectral bride;  
For he, if he had not been a Sultan  
of brutes,  
Would he have that hole in his side?

## IX

But what will the old man say?  
He laid a cruel snare in a pit

To catch a friend of mine one stormy  
day;  
Yet now I could even weep to think  
of it;  
For what will the old man say  
When he comes to the second corpse  
in the pit?

## X

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
Then to strike him and lay him low,  
That were a public merit, far,  
Whatever the Quaker holds, from  
sin;  
But the red life spilt for a private  
blow—  
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war  
Are scarcely even akin.

## XI

O me, why have they not buried me  
deep enough?  
Is it kind to have made me a grave so  
rough,  
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?  
Maybe still I am but half-dead;  
Then I cannot be wholly dumb;  
I will cry to the steps above my head,  
And somebody, surely, some kind  
heart will come  
To bury me, bury me  
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

## VI

I  
My life has crept so long on a broken  
wing  
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of  
horror and fear,  
That I come to be grateful at last  
for a little thing:  
My mood is changed, for it fell at a  
time of year  
When the face of night is fair on the  
dewy downs,  
And the shining daffodil dies, and  
the Charlotter  
And starry Gemini hang like glorious  
crowns

Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
That like a silent lightning under the stars  
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,  
And spokc of a hope for the world in the coming wars—  
" And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,  
Knowing I tarry for thee," and pointed to Mars  
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

" It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
That old hysterical mock-disease should die."  
And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath  
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,  
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly,  
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

## II

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight  
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,  
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright :  
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair  
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,  
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,  
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,  
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire :  
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace  
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,  
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,  
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat  
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

## III

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,  
" It is time, it is time, O passionate heart," said I  
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,  
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told :  
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd !  
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,  
Yet God's just wrath shall be break'd on a giant liar ;  
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,  
And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;  
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,  
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,  
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

## IV

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,  
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,

And myself have awaked, as it  
seems, to the better mind ;  
It is better to fight for the good, than  
to rail at the ill ;  
I have felt with my native land, I  
am one with my kind,  
I embrace the purpose of God, and  
the doom assign'd.

THE BROOK;

AN IDYL

" HERE, by this brook, we parted ;  
I to the East  
And he for Italy—too late—too  
late :  
One whom the strong sons of the  
world despise ;  
For lucky rhymes to him were srip  
and share,  
And mellow metres more than cent  
for cent ;  
Nor could he understand how money  
breeds,  
Thought it a dead thing ; yet him-  
self could make  
The thing that is not as the thing  
that is.  
O had he lived ! In our schoolbooks  
we say,  
Of those that held their heads above  
the crowd,  
They flourish'd then or then ; but  
life in him  
Could scarce be said to flourish, only  
touch'd  
On such a time as goes before the  
leaf,  
When all the wood stands in a mist  
of green,  
And nothing perfect : yet the brook  
he loved,  
For which, in branding summers of  
Bengal,  
Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neil-  
gherry air,  
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
Prattling the primrose fancies of the  
boy,  
To me that loved him ; for " O  
brook," he says,

" O babbling brook," says Edmund  
in his rhyme,  
" Whence come you ? " and the  
brook, why not ? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hen,  
I make a sudden sally  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
Or slip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorps, a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

" Poor lad, he died at Florence,  
quite worn out,  
Travelling to Naples. There is Darn-  
ley bridge,  
It has more ivy ; there the river ;  
and there  
Stands Philip's farm where brook  
and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I bubble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

" But Philip chatter'd more than  
brook or bird ;  
Old Philip ; all about the fields you  
caught  
His weary daylong chirping, like the  
dry  
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in  
summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak  
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

" O darling Katie Willows, his  
one child !  
A maiden of our century, yet most  
meek ;  
A daughter of our meadows, yet not  
coarse ;  
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel  
wand ;  
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her  
hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when  
the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit  
within.

" Sweet Katie, once I did her a  
good turn,  
Her and her far-off cousin and  
betrothed,  
James Willows, of one name and  
heart with her,  
For here I came, twenty years back  
—the week  
Before I parted with poor Edmund ;  
crost  
By that old bridge which, half in  
ruins then,  
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the  
gleam  
Beyond it, where the waters marry—  
crost,  
Whistling a random bar of Bonny  
Doon,  
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate.  
The gate,  
Half-parted from a weak and scolding  
hinge,  
Stuck ; and he clamour'd from a  
casement, " run "  
To Katie somewhere in the walks  
below,  
" Run, Katie ! " Katie never ran :  
she moved

To meet me, winding under woodbine  
bowers,  
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids  
down,  
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for  
a boon.

" What was it ? less of sentiment  
than sense  
Had Katie ; not illiterate ; nor of  
those  
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive  
tears,  
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd phi-  
lanthropies,  
Divorce the Feeling from her mate  
the Deed.

" She told me. She and James  
had quarrell'd. Why ?  
What cause of quarrel ? None, she  
said, no cause ;  
James had no cause : but when I  
prest the cause,  
I learnt that James had flickering  
jealousies  
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd  
James ? I said.  
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once  
from mine,  
And sketching with her slender  
pointed foot  
Some figure like a wizard's penta-  
gram  
On garden gravel, let my query pass  
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I  
ask'd  
If James were coming. " Coming  
every day."  
She answer'd, " ever longing to ex-  
plain,  
But evermore her father came across  
With some long-winded tale, and  
broke him short ;  
And James departed vox't with him  
and her."  
How could I help her ? " Would I—  
was it wrong ? "  
(Claspt hands and that petitionary  
grace  
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere  
she spoke)

" O would I take her father for one  
 hour,  
 For one half-hour, and let him talk  
 to me ! "

And even while she spoke, I saw  
 where James  
 Made toward us, like a wader in the  
 surf,  
 Beyond the brook, waist-deep in  
 meadow-sweet.

" O Katie, what I suffer'd for your  
 sake !  
 For in I went, and call'd old Philip  
 out  
 To show the farm : full willingly he  
 rose :  
 He led me thro' the short sweet-  
 smelling lanes  
 Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he  
 went.  
 He praised his land, his horses, his  
 machines ;  
 He praised his ploughs, his cows, his  
 hogs, his dogs ;  
 He praised his hens, his geese, his  
 guinea-hens ;  
 His pigeons, who in session on their  
 roofs  
 Approved him, bowing at their own  
 deserts :  
 Then from the plaintive mother's  
 teat he took  
 Her blind and shuddering puppies,  
 naming each,  
 And naming those, his friends, for  
 whom they were :  
 Then crost the common into Darnley  
 chase  
 To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse  
 and fern  
 Twinkled the innumerable ear and  
 tail.  
 Then, seated on a serpent-rooted  
 beech,  
 He pointed out a pasturing colt, and  
 said :  
 " That was the four-year-old I sold  
 the Squire."

And there he told a long long-winded  
 tale  
 Of how the Squire had seen the colt  
 at grass,

And how it was the thing his daughter  
 wish'd,  
 And how he sent the bailiff to the  
 farm  
 To learn the price, and what the  
 price he ask'd,  
 And how the bailiff swore that he  
 was mad,  
 But he stood firm ; and so the matter  
 hung ;  
 He gave them lie : and five days  
 after that  
 He met the bailiff at the Golden  
 Fleece,  
 Who then and there had offer'd some-  
 thing more,  
 But he stood firm ; and so the matter  
 hung ;  
 He knew the man ; the colt would  
 fetch its price ;  
 He gave them lie : and how by  
 chance at last  
 (It might be May or April, he forgot,  
 The last of April or the first of  
 May)  
 He found the bailiff riding by the  
 farm,  
 And, talking from the point, he drew  
 him in,  
 And there he mellow'd all his heart  
 with ale,  
 Until they closed a bargain, hand in  
 hand.

" Then, while I breathed in sight  
 of haven, he,  
 Poor fellow, could he help it ? recom-  
 menced,  
 And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,  
 Wild Will, Black Boss, Tantivy,  
 Tallyho,  
 Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon,  
 the Jilt,  
 Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the  
 rest,  
 Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
 And with me Philip, talking still ; and  
 so  
 We turn'd our foreheads from the  
 falling sun,  
 And following our own shadows thrice  
 as long  
 As when they follow'd us from Philip's  
 door,

Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content  
Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers ;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows ;  
I make the notted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses ;  
I linger by my shingly bars ;  
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go ; and these are gone,  
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,  
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,  
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace : and he,  
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words  
Remains the lean P.W. on his tomb : I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks  
By the long wash of Australasian seas  
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,  
And breathes in converse seasons,  
All are gone."

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile  
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind  
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook  
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,  
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath

Of tender air made tremble in the hedge  
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings ;  
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,  
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared  
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within :  
Then, wondering, ask'd her " Are you from the farm ? "  
" Yes " answer'd she. " Pray stay a little : pardon me ;  
What do they call you ? " " Katie." " That were strange,  
What surname ? " " Willows."  
" No ! " " That is my name."  
" Indeed ! " and here he look'd so self-perplexed,  
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he  
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,  
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.  
Then looking at her ; " Too happy, fresh and fair,  
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,  
To be the ghost of one who bore your name  
About these meadows, twenty years ago."

" Have you not heard ? " said Katie, " we came back.  
We bought the farm we tenanted before.  
Am I so like her ? so they said on board,  
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
That most she loves to talk of, come with me.  
My brother James is in the harvest-field :  
But she—you will be welcome—O, come in ! "

## THE LETTERS

I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,  
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant  
air.  
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
And saw the altar cold and bare.  
A clog of lead was round my feet,  
A band of pain across my brow :  
" Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall  
meet  
Before you hear my marriage vow."

II

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song  
That mock'd the wholesome human  
heart,  
And then we met in wrath and wrong.  
We met, but only meant to part.  
Full cold my greeting was and dry :  
She faintly smiled, she hardly  
moved ;  
I saw with half-unconscious eye  
She wore the colours I approved.

III

She took the little ivory chest,  
With half a sigh she turn'd the  
key,  
Then raised her head with lips com-  
prest,  
And gave my letters back to me.  
And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
My gifts, when gifts of mine could  
please ;  
As looks a father on the things  
Of his dead son, I look'd on those.

IV

She told me all her friends had said ;  
I raged against the public liar ;  
She talk'd as if her love were dead,  
But in my words were seeds of fire.  
" No more of love ; your sex is  
known :  
I never will be twice deceived.  
Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
The woman cannot be believed.

V

" Thro' slander, meanest spawn of  
Hell  
(And women's slander is the worst),  
And you, whom once I loved so well,  
Thro' you, my life will be accurst."  
I spoke with heart, and heat and  
force,  
I shook her breast with vague  
alarms—  
Like torrents from a mountain  
source  
We rush'd into each other's arms.

VI

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the  
stars,  
And sweet the vapour-braided blue,  
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
As homeward by the church I  
drew.  
The very graves appear'd to smile,  
So fresh they rose in shadow'd  
swells ;  
" Dark porch," I said, " and silent  
aisle,  
There comes a sound of marriage  
bells."

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE  
DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

I

BURY the Great Duke  
With an empire's lamentation,  
Let us bury the Great Duke  
To the noise of the mourning of a  
mighty nation,  
Mourning when their leaders fall,  
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom  
we deplore ?  
Here, in streaming London's central  
roar,  
Let the sound of those he wrought  
for,  
And the feet of those he fought for,  
Echo round his bones for evermore.

## III

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,  
As fits an universal woe,  
Let the long long procession go,  
And let the sorrowing crowd about  
it grow,  
And let the mournful martial music  
blow ;  
The last great Englishman is low.

## IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
Remembering all his greatness in the  
Past.  
No more in soldier fashion will he  
greet  
With lifted hand the gazer in the  
street.  
O friends, our chief state-oracle is  
mute :  
Mourn for the man of long-enduring  
blood,  
The statesman-warrior, moderate,  
resolute,  
Whole in himself, a common good.  
Mourn for the man of amplest  
influence,  
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
Great in council and great in war,  
Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common-sense,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime,  
O good gray head which all men  
knew,  
O voice from which their omens all  
men drew,  
O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fall'n at length that tower of  
strength  
Which stood four-square to all the  
winds that blew !  
Such was he whom we deplore.

The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
The great World-victor's victor will  
be seen no more.

## V

All is over and done :  
Render thanks to the Giver,

England, for thy son.  
Let the bell be toll'd.  
Render thanks to the Giver,  
And render him to the mould.  
Under the cross of gold  
That shines over city and river,  
There he shall rest for ever  
Among the wise and the bold.  
Let the bell be toll'd :  
And a reverent people behold  
The towering car, the sable steeds :  
Bright let it be with its blazon'd  
deeds,  
Dark in its funeral fold.  
Let the bell be toll'd :  
And a deeper knell in the heart be  
knoll'd ;  
And the sound of the sorrowing  
anthem roll'd  
Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;  
And the volleying cannon thunder  
his loss ;  
He knew their voices of old.  
For many a time in many a clime  
His captain's-car has heard them  
boom  
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom :  
When he with those deep voices  
wrought,  
Guarding realms and kings from  
shame ;  
With those deep voices our dead  
captain taught  
The tyrant, and asserts his claim  
In that dread sound to the great  
name,  
Which he has worn so pure of blame,  
In praise and in dispraise the same,  
A man of well-temper'd frame.  
O civic muse, to such a name,  
To such a name for ages long,  
To such a name,  
Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
And ever-ringing avenues of song.

## VI

Who is he that cometh, like an  
honour'd guest,  
With banner and with music, with  
soldier and with priest,  
With a nation weeping, and breaking  
on my rest ?  
Mighty seaman, this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea.

Thine island loves thee well, thou  
famous man,  
The greatest sailor since our world  
began.

Now, to the roll of muffled drums,  
To thee the greatest soldier comes :  
For this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea ;  
His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;  
O give him welcome, this is he  
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,  
And worthy to be laid by thee ;  
For this is England's greatest son,  
He that gain'd a hundred fights,  
Nor ever lost an English gun ;  
This is he that far away  
Against the myriads of Assaye  
Clash'd with his fiery few and won :  
And underneath another sun,  
Warring on a later day,  
Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
The treble works, the vast designs  
Of his labour'd rampart-lines,  
Where he greatly stood at bay,  
Whence he issued forth anew,  
And ever great and greater grew,  
Beating from the wasted vines  
Back to France her banded swarms,  
Back to France with countless blows,  
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,  
Follow'd up in valley and glen  
With blare of bugle, clamour of men,  
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
And England pouring on her foes.  
Such a war had such a close,  
Again their ravening eagle rose  
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadow-  
ing wings,  
And barking for the thrones of kings ;  
Till one that sought but Duty's iron  
crown  
On that loud sabbath shook the  
spoiler down ;  
A day of onsets of despair !  
Dash'd on every rocky square  
Their surging charges foam'd them-  
selves away ;  
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;  
Thro' the long-tormented air  
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant  
ray,  
And down we swept and charged and  
overthrew.

So great a soldier taught us there,  
What long-enduring hearts could do  
In that world's-quake, Water-  
loo !

Mighty seaman, tender and true,  
And pure as he from taint of craven  
guile,

O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
If aught of things that here betell  
Touch a spirit among things divine,  
If love of country move thee there  
at all,

Be glad, because his bones are laid  
by thine !

And thro' the centuries let a people's  
voice

In full acclaim,  
A people's voice,  
The proof and echo of all human  
fame,

A people's voice, when they rejoice  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
Attest their great commander's claim  
With honour, honour, honour, hon-  
our to him,

Eternal honour to his name.

## VII

A people's voice ! we are a people  
yet.

Tho' all men else their nobler dreams  
forget,

Confused by brainless mobs and law-  
less Powers ;

Thank Him who isled us here, and  
roughly set

His Briton in blown seas and storming  
showers,

We have a voice, with which to pay  
the debt

Of boundless love and reverence and  
regret

To those great men who fought, and  
kept it ours.

And keep it ours, O God, from brute  
control ;

O Statesmen, guard us, guard the  
eye, the soul

Of Europe, keep our noble England  
whole,

And save the one true seed of freedom  
sown  
Betwixt a people and their ancient  
throne,  
That sober freedom out of which  
there springs  
Our loyal passion for our temperate  
kings ;  
For, saving that, ye help to save  
mankind  
Till public wrong be crumbled into  
dust,  
And drill the raw world for the march  
of mind,  
Till crowds at length be sane and  
crowns be just.  
But wink no more in slothful over-  
trust.  
Remember him who led your  
hosts ;  
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.  
Your cannons moulder on the sea-  
ward wall ;  
His voice is silent in your council-  
hall  
For ever ; and whatever tempests  
lour  
For ever silent ; even if they broke  
In thunder, silent ; yet remember  
all  
He spoke among you, and the Man  
who spoke ;  
Who never sold the truth to serve  
the hour,  
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for  
power ;  
Who let the turbid streams of rumour  
flow  
Thro' either babbling world of high  
and low ;  
Whose life was work, whose language  
rife  
With rugged maxims hewn from  
life ;  
Who never spoke against a foe ;  
Whose eighty winters freeze with  
one rebuke  
All great self-seekers trampling on  
the right :  
Truth-teller was our England's Al-  
fred named ;  
Truth-lover was our English Duke ;  
Whatever record leap to light  
He never shall be shamed.

## III

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
He, on whom from both her open  
hands  
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,  
And affluent Fortune emptied all her  
horn.  
Yea, let all good things await  
Him who cares not to be great,  
But as he saves or serves the state.  
Not once or twice in our rough island-  
story,  
The path of duty was the way to  
glory :  
He that walks it, only thirsting  
For the right, and learns to deaden  
Love of self, before his journey closes,  
He shall find the stubborn thistle  
bursting  
Into glossy purples, which out-  
redden  
All voluptuous garden-roses.  
Not once or twice in our fair  
island-story,  
The path of duty was the way to  
glory :  
He, that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and  
hands,  
Thro' the long gorge to the far light  
has won  
His path upward, and prevail'd,  
Shall find the toppling crags of  
Duty scaled  
Are close upon the shining table-  
lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and  
sun.  
Such was he : his work is done,  
But while the races of mankind  
endure,  
Let his great example stand  
Colossal, seen of every land,  
And keep the soldier firm, the states-  
man pure ;  
Till in all lands and thro' all human  
story  
The path of duty be the way to  
glory :  
And let the land whose hearths he  
saved from shame

## THE DAISY

For many and many an age proclaim  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
And when the long-illumined cities  
flame,  
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,  
With honour, honour, honour, honour  
to him,  
Eternal honour to his name.

## IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not  
see :  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one about whose patriarchal  
knee  
Late the little children clung :  
O peace, it is a day of pain  
For one, upon whose hand and heart  
and brain  
Once the weight and fate of Europe  
hung.  
Ours the pain, be his the gain !  
More than is of man's degree  
Must be with us, watching here  
At this, our great solemnity.  
Whom we see not we revere,  
We revere, and we refrain  
From talk of battles loud and vain,  
And brawling memories all too free  
For such a wise humility  
As befits a solemn fane :  
We revere, and while we hear  
The tides of Music's golden sea  
Setting toward eternity,  
Uplifted high in heart and hope are  
we,  
Until we doubt not that for one so  
true  
There must be other nobler work to  
do  
Than when we fought at Waterloo,  
And Victor he must ever be.  
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
And break the shore, and evermore  
Make and break, and work their will ;  
Tho' world on world in myriad  
myriads roll  
Round us, each with different powers,  
And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the  
soul ?

On God and Godlike men we build  
our trust.  
Hush, the Dead March wails in the  
people's ears :  
The dark crowd moves, and there are  
sobs and tears :  
The black earth yawns : the mortal  
disappears ;  
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;  
He is gone who seem'd so great.—  
Gone ; but nothing can bereave him  
Of the force he made his own  
Being here, and we believe him  
Something far advanced in State,  
And that he wears a truer crown  
Than any wreath that man can  
weave him.  
Speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave  
him.  
God accept him, Christ receive him.

1852.

## THE DAISY

## WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and  
mine,  
In lands of palm and southern pine ;  
In lands of palm, of orange-blos-  
som,  
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia show'd  
In ruin, by the mountain road ;  
How like a gem, beneath, the  
city  
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell  
The torrent vineyard streaming fell  
To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
That only heaved with a summer  
swell.

What slender campanill grew  
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;  
Where, here and there, on sandy  
beaches  
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to  
rove,  
Yet present in his natal grove,  
Now watching high on mountain  
cornice,  
And steering, now, from a purple  
cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;  
Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
And drank, and loyally drank to  
him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us  
most,  
Not the clipt palm of which they  
boast ;  
But distant colour, happy hamlet,  
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
A light amid its olives green ;  
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;  
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;  
And, crossing, oft we saw the  
glisten  
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and  
cold,  
Those niched shapes of noble mould,  
A princely people's awful princes,  
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,  
In those long galleries, were ours ;  
What drives about the freshi Cascine  
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each com-  
plete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,  
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard  
plain  
Remember what a plague of rain ;  
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;  
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard  
piles ;  
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom,  
the glory !

A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.  
I stood among the silent statues,  
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flushed, how phantom-  
fair,  
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there  
A thousand shadowy-pencil'd  
valleys  
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last  
To Como ; shower and storm and  
blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his  
limit,  
And all was flooded ; and how we  
past

From Como, when the light was  
gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,  
The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,  
As on The Lariano crept  
To that fair port below the castle  
Of Queen Theodolind, where we  
slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake  
A cypress in the moonlight shake,  
The moonlight touching o'er a  
terrace  
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,  
And up the snowy Splügen drew,  
But ere we reach'd the highest  
summit  
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,  
And now it tells of Italy.

O love, we two shall go no longer  
To lands of summer across the sea ;

So dear a life your arms enfold  
Whose crying is a cry for gold :

Yet here to-night in this dark city,  
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and  
dry,

This nursing of another sky

Still in the little book you lent me,  
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
The gloom that saddens Heaven and  
Earth,

The bitter east, the misty summer  
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,  
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,

Perchance, to dream you still  
beside me,

My fancy fled to the South again.

#### TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
God-father, come and see your boy :

Your presence will be sun in winter,  
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,  
Who give the Fiend himself his due,  
Should eighty-thousand college-  
councils

Thunder "Anathema," friend, at  
you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in  
spite

At you, so careful of the right,  
Yet one lay-hearth would give you  
welcome

(Take it and come) to the Isle of  
Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of  
town,

I watch the twilight falling brown  
All round a careless-order'd garden  
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you  
dine,

But honest talk and wholesome wine,  
And only hear the magpie gossip  
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand

And further on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a breaker on chalk and  
sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,

And on thro' zones of light and  
shadow

Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
Which make a selfish war begin ;  
Dispute the claims, arrange the  
chances ;

Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod  
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;

Till you should turn to dearer  
matters,

Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How blest to help the slender store,  
I sow mend the dwellings, of the poor ;

How gain in life, as life advances,  
Valour and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as  
yet

Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;  
But when the wreath of March has

blossom'd,  
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,  
For those are few we hold as dear ;

Not pay but one, but come for  
many,

Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.

## WILL

## I

O WELL for him whose will is strong !  
He suffers, but he will not suffer  
long ;  
He suffers, but he cannot suffer  
wrong :  
For him nor moves the loud world's  
random mock,  
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves  
confound,  
Who seems a promontory of rock,  
That, compass'd round with turbu-  
lent sound,  
In muddle ocean meets the surging  
shock,  
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

## II

But ill for him who, bettering not  
with time,  
Corrupts the strength of heaven-  
descended Will,  
And ever weaker grows thro' acted  
crime,  
Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
Recurring and suggesting still !  
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
And o'er a weary sultry land,  
Far beneath a blazing vault,  
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous  
hill,  
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT  
BRIGADE

## I

HALF a league, half a league,  
Half a leugue onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
" Forward, the Light Brigade !  
" Charge for the guns ! " he said :  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

## II

" Forward, the Light Brigade ! "  
Was there a man dismay'd ?

Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd :  
Their's not to make reply,  
Their's not to reason why,  
Their's but to do and die :  
Into the Valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

## III

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

## IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wonder'd :  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro' the line they broke ;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back, but not  
Not the six hundred.

## V

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
Left of six hundred.

## VI

When can their glory fade ?  
O the wild charge they made !  
All the world wonder'd.  
Honour the charge they made !  
Honour the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred !

## IDYLLS OF THE KING

### DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory—since he held them dear,  
Perchance as finding there unconsciously  
Some image of himself—I dedicate, I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—  
These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me  
Scarce other than my own ideal knight,  
“Who reverenced his conscience as his king ;  
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong ;  
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd to it ;  
Who loved one only and who clave to her—”  
Her—over all whose realms to their last isle,  
Commingled with the gloom of imminent war,  
The shadow of His loss drew like eclipse,  
Darkening the world. We have lost him : he is gone :  
We know him now ; all narrow jealousies  
Are silent ; and we see him as he moved,  
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,  
With what sublime repression of himself,  
And in what limits, and how tenderly ;  
Not swaying to this faction or to that ;  
Not making his high place the lawless perch

Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground  
For pleasure ; but thro' all this tract of years  
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,  
Before a thousand peering little-nesses,  
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne,  
And blackens every blot : for where is he,  
Who dares foreshadow for an only son  
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his ?  
Or how should England dreaming of his sons  
Hope more for these than some inheritance  
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
Laborious for her people and her poor—  
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day—  
Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste  
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace—  
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gloam  
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,  
Beyond all titles, and a household name,  
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure;  
 Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,  
 Remembering all the beauty of that star  
 Which shone so close beside Thee, that ye made  
 One light together, but has past and leaves  
 The Crown a lonely splendour.

May all love,  
 His love, unseen but felt, o'er-  
 shadow Thee,  
 The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,  
 The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,  
 The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,  
 Till God's love set Thee at his side again!

Loved her, and often with her own white hands  
 Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,  
 Next after her own self, in all the court.  
 And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart  
 Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
 And loveliest of all women upon earth.  
 And seeing them so tender and so close,  
 Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.  
 But when a rumour rose about the Queen,  
 Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,  
 Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard  
 The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,  
 Not less Geraint believed it; and thereto fell  
 A horror on him, lest his gentle wife, Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
 Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint  
 In nature: wherefore going to the king,  
 He made this pretext, that his princedom lay  
 Close on the borders of a territory, Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff knights,  
 Assassins, and all flyers from the hand  
 Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law:  
 And therefore, till the king himself should please  
 To cleanse this common sewer of all his realm,  
 He craved a fair permission to depart,  
 And thereto defend his marches; and the king  
 Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,  
 Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode, And fifty knights rode with them, to the shores

## ENID

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,  
 A tributary prince of Devon, one Of that great order of the Table Round,  
 Had married Enid, Yniol's only child, And loved her, as he loved the light of Heaven,  
 And as the light of Heaven varies, now At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night  
 With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint  
 To make her beauty vary day by day,  
 In crimsons and in purples and in gems.  
 And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,  
 Who first had found and loved her in a state  
 Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him In some fresh splendour; and the Queen herself,  
 Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,

Of Severn, and they past to their own land ;  
 Where, thinking, that if ever yet was wife  
 True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,  
 He compass'd her with sweet observances  
 And worship, never leaving her, and grew  
 Forgetful of his promise to the king,  
 Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
 Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,  
 Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
 Forgetful of his princedom and its cares.  
 And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.  
 And by and by the people, when they met  
 In twos and threes, or fuller companies,  
 Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him  
 As of a prince whose manhood was all gone,  
 And molten down in mere uxoriousness.  
 And this she gather'd from the people's eyes :  
 This too the women who attired her head,  
 To please her, dwelling on his boundless love,  
 Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the more :  
 And day by day she thought to tell Geraint,  
 But could not out of bashful delicacy ;  
 While he that watch'd her sadden, was the more  
 Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer morn  
 (They sleeping each by other) the new sun  
 Beat thro' the blindless casement of the room,  
 And heated the strong warrior in his dreams ;  
 Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,  
 And bared the knotted column of his throat,

The massive square of his heroic breast,  
 And arms on which the standing muscle sloped,  
 As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,  
 Running too vehemently to break upon it.  
 And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,  
 Admiring him, and thought within herself,  
 Was ever man so grandly made as he ?  
 Then, like a shadow, past the people's talk  
 And accusation of uxoriousness  
 Across her mind, and bowing over him,  
 Low to her own heart piteously she said :

“ O noble breast and all-puissant arms,  
 Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men  
 Reproach you, saying all your force is gone ?  
 I am the cause because I dare not speak  
 And tell him what I think and what they say.  
 And yet I hate that he should linger here ;  
 I cannot love my lord and not his name.  
 Far liever had I gird his harness on him,  
 And ride with him to battle and stand by,  
 And watch his mighty hand striking great blows  
 At caitiffs and at wrongers of the world.  
 Far better were I laid in the dark earth,  
 Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
 Not to be folded more in these dear arms,  
 And darken'd from the high light in his eyes,  
 Than that my lord thro' me should suffer shame.

<p>Am I so bold, and could I so stand by, And see my dear lord wounded in the strife, Or may be pierced to death before mine eyes, And yet not dare to tell him what I think, And how men slur him, saying all his force Is melted into mere effeminacy ? O me, I fear that I am no true wife."</p>	<p>And you, put on your worst and meanest dress And ride with me." And Enid ask'd, amazed, " If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault." But he, " I charge you, ask not but obey." Then she bethought her of a faded silk, A faded mantle and a faded veil, And moving toward a cedarn cabinet, Wherein she kept them folded reverently With sprigs of summer laid between the folds, She took them, and array'd herself therein, Remembering when first he came on her Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it, And all her foolish fears about the dress, And all his journey to her, as himself Had told her, and their coming to the court.</p>
<p>Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke, And the strong passion in her made her weep True tears upon his broad and naked breast, And these awoke him, and by great mischance He heard but fragments of her later words, And that she fear'd she was not a true wife. And then he thought, " In spite of all my care, For all my pains, poor man, for all my pains, She is not faithful to me, and I see her Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's hall." Then tho' he loved and reverenced her too much To dream she could be guilty of foul act, Right thro' his manful breast darted the pang That makes a man, in the sweet face of her Whom he loves most, lonely and miserable. At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out of bed, And shook his drowsy squire awake and cried, " My charger and her palfroy," then to her, " I will ride forth into the wilderness ; For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to win, I have not fall'n so low as some would wish.</p>	<p>For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk. There on a day, he sitting high in hall, Before him came a forester of Dean, Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart Taller than all his fellows, milky-white, First seen that day : these things he told the king. Then the good king gave order to let blow His horns for hunting on the morrow morn. And when the Queen petition'd for his leave To see the hunt, allow'd it easily. So with the morning all the court were gone. But Guinevere lay late into the morn, Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her love For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt ;</p>

But rose at last, a single maiden with her,  
 Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd the wood ;  
 There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd  
 Waiting to hear the hounds ; but heard instead  
 A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince Geraint,  
 Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress  
 Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,  
 Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow ford  
 Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.  
 A purple scarf, at either end whereof  
 There swung an apple of the purest gold,  
 Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up  
 To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly  
 In summer suit and silks of holiday.  
 Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she,  
 Sweetly and stately, and with all grace  
 Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd him :  
 " Late, late, Sir Prince," she said,  
 " later than we ! "  
 " Yea, noble Queen," he answer'd,  
 " and so late  
 That I but come like you to see the hunt,  
 Not join it." " Therefore wait with me," she said ;  
 " For on this little knoll, if anywhere,  
 There is good chance that we shall hear the hounds :  
 Here often they break covert at our feet."

And while they listen'd for the distant hunt,  
 And chiefly for the baying of Cavall, King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth, there rode  
 Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf ;

Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the knight  
 Had visor up, and show'd a youthful face,  
 Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.  
 And Guinevere, not mindful of his face  
 In the king's hall, desired his name, and sent  
 Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf ;  
 Who being vicious, old and irritable, And doubling all his master's vice of pride,  
 Made answer sharply that she should not know.  
 " Then will I ask it of himself," she said.  
 " Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not," cried the dwarf ;  
 " Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him ;"  
 And when she put her horse toward the knight,  
 Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd  
 Indignant to the Queen ; at which Geraint  
 Exclaiming, " Surely I will learn the name,"  
 Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him.  
 Who answer'd as before ; and when the Prince  
 Had put his horse in motion toward the knight,  
 Struck at him with his whip, and cut his cheek.  
 The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,  
 Dyeing it ; and his quick, instinctive hand  
 Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him : But he, from his exceeding manfulness  
 And pure nobility of temperament, Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, refrain'd  
 From ev'n a word, and so returning said :  
 " I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,

Done in your maiden's person to yourself :  
 And I will track this vermin to their earths :  
 For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt  
 To find, at some place I shall come at, arms  
 On loan, or else for pledge ; and, being found,  
 Then will I fight him, and will break his pride,  
 And on the third day, will again be here,  
 So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell."

" Farewell, fair Prince," answer'd the stately Queen.  
 " Be prosperous in this journey, as in all ;  
 And may you light on all things that you love,  
 And live to wed with her whom first you love :  
 But ere you wed with any, bring your bride,  
 And I, were she the daughter of a king,  
 Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the hedge,  
 Will clothe her for her bridals like the sun."

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that he heard  
 The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,  
 A little vext at losing of the hunt,  
 A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
 By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy glade  
 And valley, with fixt eye following the three.  
 At last they issued from the world of wood,  
 And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,  
 And show'd themselves against the sky, and sank.  
 And thither came Geraint, and underneath  
 Beheld the long street of a little town  
 In a long valley, on one side of which,

White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose ;  
 And on one side a castle in decay,  
 Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry ravine :  
 And out of town and valley came a noise  
 As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
 Brawling, or like a clamour of the rooks  
 At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the three,  
 And enter'd, and were lost behind the walls.  
 " So," thought Geraint, " I have track'd him to his earth."  
 And down the long street riding wearily,  
 Found every hostel full, and everywhere  
 Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss  
 And bustling whistle of the youth who scour'd  
 His master's armour ; and of such a one  
 He ask'd, " What means the tumult in the town ?"  
 Who told him, scouring still " The sparrow-hawk ! "  
 Then riding close behind an ancient churl,  
 Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,  
 Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,  
 Ask'd yet once more what meant the hubbub here ?  
 Who answer'd gruffly, " Ugh ! the sparrow-hawk."  
 Then riding further past an armourer's  
 Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above his work,  
 Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,  
 He put the self-same query, but the man  
 Not turning round, nor looking at him, said :

" Friend, he that labours for the sparrow-hawk  
 Has little time for idle questioners." Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen : " A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk ! Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck him dead ! Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg  
 The murmur of the world ! What is it to me ? O wretched set of sparrows, one and all, Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks ! Speak, if you be not like the rest, hawk-mad, Where can I get me harbourage for the night ? And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy ? Speak ! " At this the armourer turning all amazed And seeing one so gay in purple silks, Came forward with the helmet yet in hand  
 And answer'd, " Pardon me, O stranger knight ; We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn, And there is scantly time for half the work. Arms ? truth ! I know not : all are wanted here. Harbourage ? truth, good truth, I know not, save, It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge Yonder." He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet, Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine. There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl, (His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence, Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and said :

" Whither, fair son ? " to whom Geraint replied, " O friend, I seek a harbourage for the night." Then Yniol, " Enter therefore and partake The slender entertainment of a house Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd." " Thanks, venerable friend," replied Geraint ; " So that you do not serve me sparrow-hawks For supper, I will enter, I will eat With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast." Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed Earl, And answer'd, " Graver cause than yours is mine To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk : But in, go in ; for save yourself desire it, We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest." Then rode Geraint into the castle court, His charger trampling many a prickly star Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones. He look'd and saw that all was ruinous. Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with fern ; And here had fall'n a great part of a tower, Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff, And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers : And high above a piece of turret stair, Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms, And suck'd the joining of the stones, and look'd A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,  
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang  
Clear thro' the open casement of the Hall,  
Singing, and as the sweet voice of a bird,  
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is  
That sings so delicately clear, and make  
Conjecture of the plumage and the form,  
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraunt,  
And made him like a man abroad at morn  
When first the liquid note beloved of men  
Comes flying over many a windy wave  
To Britain, and in April suddenly  
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green and red,  
And he suspends his converse with a friend,  
Or it may be the labour of his hands,  
To think or say, "there is the nightingale ;"  
So fared it with Geraunt, who thought and said,  
"Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me"  
It chanced the song that Enid sang was one  
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang  
"Twin, Fortune, turn thy wheel  
and lower the proud,  
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud ;  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.  
" Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown ;  
With that wild wheel we go not up or down ;  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

" Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands,  
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands,  
For man is man and master of his fate  
" Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd ;  
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud,  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate"  
" Hark, by the bird's song you may learn the nest "  
Said Yniol, " Enter quickly."  
Entering then,  
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones,  
The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb d Hall,  
He found an ancient dame in dim brocade,  
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-white,  
That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,  
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,  
Her daughter. In a moment thought Geraunt,  
" Here by God's rood is the one maid for me "  
But none spake word except the hoary Earl  
" Enid, the good knight's horse stands in the court,  
Take him to stall, and give him corn,  
and then  
Go to the town and buy us flesh and wine,  
And we will make us merry as we may.  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great."  
He spake the Prince, as Enid past him, faint  
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught  
His purple scarf, and hold, and said  
" Forbear !  
Rest ! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O my Son,

Endures not that her guest should  
serve himself,"  
And reverencing the custom of the  
house  
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the  
stall ;  
And after went her way across the  
bridge,  
And reach'd the town, and while the  
Prince and Earl  
Yet spoke together, came again with  
one,  
A youth, that following with a costrel  
bore  
The means of goodly welcome, flesh  
and wine.  
And Enid brought sweet cakes to  
make them cheer,  
And in her veil enfolded, manchet  
bread.  
And then, because their hall must also  
serve  
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and  
spread the board,  
And stood behind, and waited on the  
three.  
And seeing her so sweet and service-  
able,  
Geraint had longing in him evermore  
To stoop and kiss the tender little  
thumb,  
That crost the trencher as she laid it  
down ;  
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
For now the wine made summer in  
his veins,  
Let his eye rove in following, or rest  
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,  
Now here, now there, about the dusky  
hall ;  
Then suddenly address the hoary  
Earl :

" Fair Host and Earl, I pray your  
courtesy ;  
This sparrow-hawk, what is he, tell  
me of him.  
His name ? but no, good faith, I will  
not have it :  
For if he be the knight whom late I  
saw,

Ride into that new fortress by your  
town,  
White from the mason's hand, then  
have I sworn  
From his own lips to have it—I am  
Geraint  
Of Devon—for this morning when  
the Queen  
Sent her own maiden to demand the  
name,  
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen  
thing,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she  
return'd  
Indignant to the Queen ; and then I  
swore  
That I would track this caitiff to his  
hold,  
And fight and break his pride, and  
have it of him.  
And all unarm'd I rode, and thought  
to find  
Arms in your town, where all the men  
are mad ;  
They take the rustic murmur of their  
bourg  
For the great wave that echoes round  
the world ;  
They would not hear me speak : but  
if you know  
Where I can light on arms, or if your-  
self  
Should have them, tell me, seeing I  
have sworn  
That I will break his pride and learn  
his name,  
Avenging this great insult done the  
Queen."

Then cried Earl Yniol. " Art thou  
he indeed,  
Geraint, a name far-sounded among  
men  
For noble deeds ? and truly I, when  
first  
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,  
Felt you were somewhat, yea and by  
your state  
And presence might have guess'd you  
one of those  
That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.  
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery,  
For this dear child hath often heard  
me praise

Your feats of arms, and often when  
I paused  
Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to  
hear ;  
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds  
To noble hearts who see but acts of  
wrong :  
O never yet had woman such a pair  
Of suitors as this maiden ; first  
Limours,  
A creature wholly given to brawls and  
wine,  
Drunk even when he wo'd ; and be  
he dead  
I know not, but he past to the wild  
land.  
The second was your foe, the sparrow-  
hawk,  
My curse, my nephew—I will not let  
his name  
Slip from my lips if I can help it—he,  
When I that knew him fierce and  
turbulent  
Refused her to him, then his pride  
awoke ;  
And since the proud man often is the  
mean,  
He sow'd a slander in the common ear,  
Affirming that his father left him  
gold,  
And in my charge, which was not  
render'd to him ;  
Bribed with large promises the men  
who served  
About my person, the more easily  
Because my means were somewhat  
broken into  
Thro' open doors and hospitality ;  
Raised my own town against me in  
the night  
Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my  
house ;  
From mine own earldom foully ousted  
me ;  
Built that new fort to overawe my  
friends,  
For truly there are those who love me  
yet ;  
And keeps me in this ruinous castle  
here,  
Where doubtless he would put me  
soon to death,  
But that his pride too much despises  
me :

And I myself sometimes despise my-  
self ;  
For I have let men be, and have their  
way ;  
Am much too gentle, have not used  
my power :  
Nor know I whether I be very base  
Or very manful, whether very wise  
Or very foolish ; only this I know,  
That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
I seem to suffer nothing heart or  
limb,  
But can endure it all most patiently."

" Well said, true heart," replied  
Geraint, " but arms :  
That if, as I suppose, your nephew  
fights  
In next day's tourney I may break his  
pride."

And Yniol answer'd " Arms, in-  
deed, but old  
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince  
Geraint,  
Are mine, and therefore at your  
asking, yours.  
But in this tournament can no man  
tilt,  
Except the lady he loves best be  
there.  
Two forks are fixt into the meadow  
ground,  
And over these is laid a silver wand,  
And over that is placed the sparrow-  
hawk,  
The prize of beauty for the fairest  
there.  
And this, what knight soever be in  
field  
Lays claim to for the lady at his  
side,  
And tilts with my good nephew there-  
upon,  
Who being apt at arms and big of  
bone  
Has ever won it for the lady with him,  
And toppling over all antagonism  
Has earn'd himself the name of spar-  
row-hawk.  
But you, that have no lady, cannot  
fight."

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright replied,  
Leaning a little toward him, " Your leave !  
Let me lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
For this dear child, because I never saw,  
Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,  
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.  
And if I fall her name will yet remain Untarnish'd as before ; but if I live,  
So aid me Heaven when at mine uttermost,  
As I will make her truly my true wife."

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart  
Danced in his bosom, seeing better days.  
And looking round he saw not Enid there,  
(Who hearing her own name had slipt away)  
But that old dame, to whom full tenderly  
And fondling all her hand in his he said,  
" Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,  
And best by her that bore her understood.  
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest  
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the Prince."

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl, and she  
With frequent smile and nod departing found,  
Half disarray'd as to her rest, the girl ;  
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek, and then  
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,  
And kept her off and gazed upon her face,  
And told her all their converse in the hall,  
Proving her heart : but never light and shade

Coursed one another more on open ground  
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and pale  
Across the face of Enid hearing her ; While slowly falling as a scale that falls,  
When weight is added only grain by grain,  
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle breast ;  
Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,  
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it ;  
So moving without answer to her rest  
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw  
The quiet night into her blood, but lay  
Contemplating her own unworthiness ;  
And when the pale and bloodless east began  
To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised  
Her mother too, and hand in hand they moved  
Down to the meadow where the jousts were held,  
And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when Geraint  
Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,  
He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,  
Himself beyond the rest pushing could move  
The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms  
Were on his princely person, but thro' these  
Princelike his bearing shone ; and errant knights  
And ladies came, and by and by the town  
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the lists.  
And there they fixt the forks into the ground,

And over these they placed a silver wand  
 And over that a golden sparrow-hawk.  
 Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,  
 Spake to the lady with him and proclaim'd,  
 " Advance and take as fairest of the fair,  
 For I these two years past have won it for thee,  
 The prize of beauty." Loudly spake the Prince,  
 " Forbear: there is a worthier," and the knight  
 With some surprise and thrice as much disdain  
 Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his face  
 Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule,  
 So burnt he was with passion, crying out,  
 " Do battle for it then," no more; and thrice  
 They clash'd together, and thrice they brake their spears.  
 Then each, dis horsed and drawing, lash'd at each  
 So often and with such blows, that all the crowd  
 Wonder'd, and now and then from distant walls  
 There came a clapping as of phantom hands.  
 So twice they fought, and twice they breathed, and still  
 The dew of their great labour, and the blood  
 Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd their force.  
 But either's force was match'd till Yniol's cry,  
 " Remember that great insult done the Queen,"  
 Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade aloft,  
 And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the bone,  
 And fell'd him, and set foot upon his breast,  
 And said, " Thy name? " To whom the fallen man

Made answer, groaning, " Edyrn, son of Nudd!"  
 Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.  
 My pride is broken: men have seen my fall."  
 " Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd," replied Geraint,  
 " These two things shalt thou do, or else thou diest.  
 First, thou thyself, thy lady, and thy dwarf,  
 Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and being there,  
 Crave pardon for that insult done the Queen,  
 And shalt abide her judgment on it; next,  
 Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy kin.  
 These two things shalt thou do, or thou shalt die."  
 And Edyrn answer'd, " These things will I do,  
 For I have never yet been overthrown,  
 And thou hast overthrown me, and my pride  
 Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall!"  
 And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,  
 And there the Queen forgave him easily.  
 And being young, he changed himself, and grew  
 To hate the sin that seem'd so like his own  
 Of Modred, Arthur's nephew, and fell at last  
 In the great battle fighting for the king.

But when the third day from the hunting-morn  
 Made a low splendour in the world, and wings  
 Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay  
 With her fair head in the dim-yellow light,  
 Among the dancing shadows of the birds,  
 Woke and bethought her of her promise given

No later than last eve to Prince Geraint—  
 So bent he seem'd on going the third day,  
 He would not leave her, till her promise given—  
 To ride with him this morning to the court,  
 And there be made known to the stately Queen,  
 And there be wedded with all ceremony.  
 At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,  
 And thought it never yet had look'd so mean.  
 For as a leaf in mid-November is  
 To what it was in mid-October,  
 seem'd  
 The dress that now she look'd on to the dress  
 She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.  
 And still she look'd, and still the terror grew  
 Of that strange bright and dreadful thing, a court,  
 All staring at her in her faded silk :  
 And softly to her own sweet heart she said :

“ This noble prince who won our earldom back,  
 So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
 Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit him !  
 Would he could tarry with us here awhile !  
 But being so beholden to the Prince,  
 It were but little grace in any of us,  
 Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,  
 To seek a second favour at his hands.  
 Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
 Myself would work eye dim, and finger lame,  
 Far liefer than so much discredit him.”

And Enid fell in longing for a dress  
 All branch'd and flower'd with gold,  
 a costly gift  
 Of her good mother, given her on the night

Before her birthday, three sad years ago,  
 That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd their house,  
 And scatter'd all they had to all the winds :  
 For while the mother show'd it, and the two  
 Were turning and admiring it, the work  
 To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
 That Edyrn's men were on them, and they fled  
 With little save the jewels they had on,  
 Which being sold and sold had bought them bread :  
 And Edyrn's men had caught them in their flight,  
 And placed them in this ruin ; and she wish'd  
 The Prince had found her in her ancient home ;  
 Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
 And roam the goodly places that she knew ;  
 And last bethought her how she used to watch,  
 Near that old home, a pool of golden carp :  
 And one was patch'd and blurr'd and lustreless  
 Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool ;  
 And half asleep she made comparison  
 Of that and these to her own faded self  
 And the gay court, and fell asleep again ;  
 And dreamt herself was such a faded form  
 Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool ;  
 But this was in the garden of a king ;  
 And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she knew  
 That all was bright ; that all about were birds  
 Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work ;  
 That all the turf was rich in plots that look'd  
 Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;

<p>And lords and ladies of the high court went    In silver tissue talking things of state;    And children of the king in cloth of gold    Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down the walks;    And while she thought "they will not see me," came    A stately queen whose name was Guinevere,    And all the children in their cloth of gold    Ran to her, crying, "if we have fish at all    Let them be gold; and charge the gardeners now    To pick the faded creature from the pool,    And cast it on the mixen that it die."</p>	<p>And answer'd, "Yea, I know it; your good gift,    So sadly lost on that unhappy night;    Your own good gift!" "Yea, surely," said the dame,    " And gladly given again this happy morn.    For when the jousts were ended yesterday,    Went Yniol thro' the town, and everywhere    He found the sack and plunder of our house    All scatter'd thro' the houses of the town;    And gave command that all which once was ours,    Should now be ours again; and yester-eve,    While you were talking sweetly with your Prince    Came one with this and laid it in my hand,    For love or fear, or seeking favour of us,    Because we have our earldom back again.    And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,    But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.</p>
<p>And Enid started waking, with her heart    All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,    And lo! it was her mother grasping her    To get her well awake; and in her hand    A suit of bright apparel, which she laid    Flat on the couch and spoke exultingly:</p>	<p>Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?    For I myself unwillingly have worn    My faded suit, as you, my child, have yours,    And howsoever patient, Yniol his.    Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,    With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,    And page, and maid, and squire, and seneschal,    And pastime both of hawk and hound, and all    That appertains to noble maintenance.    Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house;</p>
<p>" See here, my child, how fresh the colours look,    How fast they hold like colours of a shell    That keeps the wear and polish of the wave.    Why not? it never yet was worn,    I trow :    Look on it, child, and tell me if you know it."</p>	<p>But since our fortune slipt from sun to shade,    And all thro' that young traitor, cruel need    Constrain'd us, but a better time has come .</p>
<p>And Enid look'd, but all confused at first,    Could scarce divide it from her foolish dream:    Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,</p>	

So clothe yourself in this, that better fits  
 Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride :  
 For tho' you won the prize of fairest fair,  
 And tho' I heard him call you fairest fair,  
 Let never maiden think, however fair,  
 She is not fairer in new clothes than old.  
 And should some great court-lady say, the Prince  
 Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the hedge,  
 And like a madman brought her to the court,  
 Then were you shamed, and, worse,  
 might shame the Prince  
 To whom we are beholden ; but I know,  
 When my dear child is set forth at her best,  
 That neither court nor country, tho'  
 they sought  
 Thro' all the provinces like those of old  
 That lighted on Queen Esther, has her match."

Here ceased the kindly mother out of breath ;  
 And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay ;  
 Then, as the white and glittering star of morn  
 Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by  
 Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,  
 And left her maiden couch, and robed herself,  
 Help'd by the mother's careful hand and eye,  
 Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown ;  
 Who, after, turn'd her daughter round, and said,  
 She never yet had seen her half so fair ;  
 And call'd her like that maiden in the tale,

Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of flowers,  
 And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,  
 Flur, for whose love the Roman Caesar first  
 Invaded Britain, " but we beat him back,  
 As this great prince invaded us, and we,  
 Not beat him back, but welcomed him with joy.  
 And I can scarcely ride with you to court,  
 For old am I, and rough the ways and wild ;  
 But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream  
 I see my princess as I see her now,  
 Clothed with my gift, and gay among the gay."

But while the women thus rejoiced,  
 Geraint  
 Woke where he slept in the high hall,  
 and call'd  
 For Enid, and when Yniol made report  
 Of that good mother making Enid gay  
 In such apparel as might well beseem  
 His princess, or indeed the stately queen,  
 He answer'd ; " Earl, entreat her by my love,  
 Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
 That she ride with me in her faded silk."  
 Yniol with that hard message went :  
 it fell,  
 Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn :  
 For Enid all abash'd she knew not why,  
 Dared not to glance at her good mother's face,  
 But silently, in all obedience,  
 Her mother silent too, nor helping her,  
 Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd gift,  
 And robed them in her ancient suit again.

<p>And so descended. Never man rejoiced More than Geraint to greet her thus attired ; And glancing all at once as keenly at her, As careful robins eye the delver's toil, Made her cheek burn and either eyehd fall, But rested with her sweet face satisfied ; Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow, Her by both hands he caught, and sweetly said.</p>	<p>Be moulded by your wishes for her weal ; Or whether some false sense in her own self Of my contrasting brightness, overbore Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall : And such a sense might make her long for court And all its dangerous glories : and I thought, That could I somehow prove such force in her Link'd with such love for me, that at a word (No reason given her) she could cast aside</p>
<p>" O my new mother, be not wroth or grieved At your new son, for my petition to her. When late I left Caerleon, our great Queen, In words whose echo lasts, they were so sweet, Made promise, that whatever bride I brought, Herself would clothe her like the sun in Heaven. Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd hold, Beholding one so bright in dark estate,</p>	<p>A splendour dear to women, new to her, And therefore dearer ; or if not so new, Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power Of intermitted custom ; then I felt That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows, Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I do rest,</p>
<p>I vow'd that could I gain her, our kind Queen, No hand but hers, should make your Enid burst Sunlike from cloud—and likewise thought perhaps, That service done so graciously would bind</p>	<p>A prophet certain of my prophecy, That never shadow of mistrust can cross Between us. Grant me pardon for my thoughts :</p>
<p>The two together ; for I wish the two To love each other : how should Enid find A nobler friend ? Another thought I had ; I came among you here so suddenly, That tho' her gentle presence at the lists Might well have served for proof that I was loved, I doubted whether filial tenderness, Or easy nature, did not let itself</p>	<p>Armends hereafter by some gaudy-day, When your fair child shall wear your costly gift Beside your own warm hearth, with, on her knees, Who knows ? another gift of the high God, Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp you thanks."</p>
	<p>He spoke : the mother smiled, but half in tears, Then brought a mantle down and wrapt her in it, And claspt and kiss'd her, and they rode away.</p>

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had climb'd  
The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say,  
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the yellow sea;  
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea  
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale of Usk,  
By the flat meadow, till she saw them come;  
And then descending met them at the gates,  
Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,  
And did her honour as the Prince's bride,  
And clothed her for her bridals like the sun;  
And all that weck was old Caerleon gay,  
For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,  
They twain were wedded with all ceremony.

And this was on the last year's Whitsuntide,  
But Enid ever kept the faded silk,  
Remembering how first he came on her,  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it.  
And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey toward her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

And now this morning when he said to her,  
"Put on your worst and meanest dress," she found  
And took it, and array'd herself therein.

O purblind race of miserable men,  
How many among us at this very hour  
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,

By taking true for false, or false for true;  
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world  
Groping, how many, until we pass and reach  
That other, where we see as we are seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing forth  
That morning, when they both had got to horse,  
Perhaps because he loved her passionately,  
And felt that tempest brooding round his heart,  
Which, if he spoke at all, would break perforce  
Upon a head so dear in thunder, said :  
"Not at my side. I charge you ride before,  
Ever a good way on before; and this I charge you, on your duty as a wife,  
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
No, not a word!" and Enid was aghast;  
And forth they rode, but scarce three paces on,  
When crying out "Effeminate as I am,  
I will not fight my way with gilded arms,  
All shall be iron;" he loosed a mighty purse,  
Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the squire.  
So the last sight that Enid had of home  
Was all the marble threshold flashing, strown  
With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the squire  
Chafing his shoulder: then he cried again,  
"To the wilds!" and Enid leading down the tracks  
Thro' which he bade her lead him on, they past  
The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,  
Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the hern,

And wildernesses, perilous paths,  
they rode :  
Round was their pace at first, but  
slacken'd soon :  
A stranger meeting them had surely  
thought  
They rode so slowly and they look'd  
so pale,  
That each had suffer'd some exceed-  
ing wrong.  
For he was ever saying to himself  
" O I that wasted time to tend upon  
her,  
To compass her with sweet observ-  
ances,  
To dress her beautifully and keep her  
true "—  
And there he broke the sentence in  
his heart  
Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue  
May break it, when his passion  
masters him.  
And she was ever praying the sweet  
heavens  
To save her dear lord whole from any  
wound.  
And ever in her mind she cast about  
For that unnoticed failing in herself,  
Which made him look so cloudy and  
so cold ;  
Till the great plover's human whistle  
amazed  
Her heart, and glancing round the  
waste she fear'd  
In every wavering brake an ambus-  
cade.  
Then thought again " if there be such  
in me,  
I might amend it by the grace of  
heaven,  
If he would only speak and tell me  
of it."

But when the fourth part of the  
day was gone,  
Then Enid was aware of three tall  
knights  
On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind  
a rock  
In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs  
all ;  
And heard one crying to his fellow,  
" Look,

Here comes a laggard hanging down  
his head,  
Who seems no bolder than a beaten  
hound ;  
Come, we will slay him and will have  
his horse  
And armour, and his damsel shall be  
ours."

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart,  
and said ;  
" I will go back a little to my lord,  
And I will tell him all their caitiff  
talk ;  
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,  
Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,  
Than that my lord should suffer loss  
or shame."

Then she went back some paces of  
return,  
Met his full frown timidly firm, and  
said :  
" My lord, I saw three bandits by the  
rock  
Waiting to fall on you, and heard  
them boast  
That they would slay you, and pos-  
sess your horse  
And armour, and your damsel should  
be theirs."

He made a wrathful answer. " Did  
I wish  
Your warning or your silence ? one  
command  
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,  
And thus you keep it ! Well then,  
look—for now,  
Whether you wish me victory or de-  
feat,  
Long for my life, or hunger for my  
death,  
Yourself shall see my vigour is not  
lost."

Then Enid waited pale and sorrow-  
ful,  
And down upon him bare the bandit  
three.  
And at the midmost charging, Prince  
Geraint  
Drove the long spear a cubit thro'  
his breast

And out beyond ; and then against his brace  
Of comrades, each of whom had broken on him  
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,  
Swung from his brand a windy buffet out  
Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunn'd the twain  
Or slew them, and dismounting like a man  
That skins the wild beast after slaying him,  
Stript from the three dead wolves of woman born  
The three gay suits of armour which they wore,  
And let the bodies lie, but bound the suits  
Of armour on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, " Drive them on  
Before you ; " and she drove them thro' the waste.

He follow'd nearer : ruth began to work  
Against his anger in him, while he watch'd  
The being he loved best in all the world.  
With difficulty in mild obedience Driving them on : he fain had spoken to her,  
And loosed in words of sudden fire the wrath  
And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him all within ;  
But evermore it seem'd an easier thing  
At once without remorse to strike her dead,  
Than to cry " Halt," and to her own bright face  
Accuse her of the least immodesty : And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth the more  
That she could speak whom his own ear had heard  
Call herself false : and suffering thus he made

Minutes an age : but in scarce longer time  
Than at Caerleon the full-tidied Usk,  
Before he turn to fall seaward again,  
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold  
In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,  
Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks,  
Three other horsemen waiting, wholly arm'd,  
Whereof one seem'd far larger than her lord,  
And shook her pulses, crying, " Look, a prize !  
Three horses and three goodly suits of arms,  
And all in charge of whom ? a girl : set on."  
" Nay " said the second, " yonder comes a knight."  
The third, " A craven ; how he hangs his head."  
The giant answer'd merrily, " Yea, but one ?  
Wait here, and when he passes fall upon him."

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and said,  
" I will abide the coming of my lord,  
And I will tell him all their villainy.  
My lord is weary with the fight before,  
And they will fall upon him unawares.  
I needs must disobey him for his good ;  
How should I dare obey him to his harm ?  
Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me for it,  
I save a life dearer to me than mine."

And she abode his coming, and said to him  
With timid firmness, " Have I leave to speak ? "  
He said, " You take it, speaking," and she spoke.

" There lurk three villains yonder in the wood,

And each of them is wholly arm'd,  
and one  
Is larger-limb'd than you are, and  
they say  
That they will fall upon you while  
you pass."

To which he flung a wrathful  
answer back :  
" And if there were an hundred in  
the wood,  
And every man were larger-limbed  
than I,  
And all at once should sally out upon  
me,  
I swear it would not ruffle me so much  
As you that not obey me. Stand  
aside,  
And if I fall, cleave to the better  
man."

And Enid stood aside to wait the  
event,  
Not dare to watch the combat, only  
breathe  
Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a  
breath.  
And he, she dreaded most, bare down  
upon him.  
Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ;  
but Geraint's,  
A little in the late encounter strain'd,  
Struck thro' the bulky bandit's  
corselet home,  
And then brake short, and down his  
enemy roll'd,  
And there lay still ; as he that tells  
the tale,  
Saw once a great piece of a promon-  
tory,  
That had a sapling growing on it,  
slip  
From the long shore-cliff's windy  
walls to the beach,  
And there lie still, and yet the sapling  
grew :  
So lay the man transfixt. His craven  
pair  
Of comrades, making slowlier at the  
Prince,  
When now they saw their bulwark  
fallen, stood ;  
On whom the victor, to confound  
them more,

Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry ;  
for as one,  
That listens near a torrent mountain-  
brook,  
All thro' the crash of the near cataract  
hears  
The drumming thunder of the huger  
fall  
At distance, were the soldiers wont  
to hear  
His voice in battle, and be kindled  
by it,  
And foemen scared, like that false  
pair who turn'd  
Flying, but, overtaken, died the  
death  
Themselves had wrought on many  
an innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting,  
pick'd the lance  
That pleased him best, and drew  
from those dead wolves  
Their three gay suits of armour, each  
from each,  
And bound them on their horses,  
each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the  
three  
Together, and said to her, " Drive  
them on  
Before you," and she drove them  
thro' the wood.

He follow'd nearer still : the pain  
she had  
To keep them in the wild ways of the  
wood,  
Two sets of three laden with jingling  
arms,  
Together, served a little to disedge  
The sharpness of that pain about her  
heart :  
And they themselves, like creatures  
gently born  
But into bad hands fall'n, and now  
so long  
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their  
light ears, and felt  
Her low firm voice and tender govern-  
ment.

So thro' the green gloom of the  
wood they past,

And issuing under open heavens be-  
held  
A little town with towers, upon a  
rock,  
And close beneath, a meadow gem-  
like chased  
In the brown wild, and mowers mow-  
ing in it :  
And down a rocky pathway from the  
place  
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that  
in his hand  
Bare victual for the mowers : and  
Geraint  
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale :  
Then, moving downward to the  
meadow ground,  
He, when the fair-hair'd youth came  
by him, said,  
" Friend, let her eat ; the damsel is  
so faint."  
" Yea, willingly," replied the youth ;  
" and you,  
My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is  
coarse,  
And only meet for mowers ; " then  
set down  
His basket, and dismounting on the  
sward  
They let the horses graze, and ate  
themselves.  
And Enid took a little delicately,  
Less having stomach for it than  
desire  
To close with her lord's pleasure ;  
but Geraint  
Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,  
And when he found all empty, was  
amazed ;  
And " Boy," said he, " I have eaten  
all, but take  
A horse and arms for guerdon ;  
choose the best."  
He, reddening in extremity of de-  
light,  
" My lord, you overpay me fifty-  
fold."  
" You will be all the wealthier," cried  
the Prince.  
" I take it as free gift, then," said  
the boy,  
" Not guerdon ; for myself can easily,  
While your good damsel rests, return,  
and fetch

Fresh victual for these mowers of  
our Earl ;  
For these are his, and all the field is  
his,  
And I myself am his ; and I will tell  
him  
How great a man you are : he loves  
to know  
When men of mark are in his terri-  
tory :  
And he will have you to his palace  
here,  
And serve you costlier than with  
mowers' fare."

Then said Geraint, " I wish no  
better fare :  
I never ate with angrier appetite  
Than when I left your mowers dinner-  
less.  
And into no Earl's palace will I go.  
I know, God knows, too much of  
palaces !  
And if he want me, let him come to  
me.  
But hire us some fair chamber for  
the night,  
And stalling for the horses, and re-  
turn  
With victual for these men, and let  
us know."

" Yea, my kind lord," said the  
glad youth, and went,  
Held his head high, and thought  
himself a knight,  
And up the rocky pathway disap-  
pear'd,  
Leading the horse, and they were  
left alone.

But when the Prince had brought  
his errant eyes  
Home from the rock, sideways he let  
them glance  
At Enid, where she droop'd : his own  
false doom,  
That shadow of mistrust should never  
cross  
Betwixt them, came upon him, and  
he sigh'd ;  
Then with another humourous ruth  
remark'd

The lusty mowers labouring dinner-less,  
And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning scythe,  
And after nodded sleepily in the heat.  
But she, remembering her old ruin'd hall,  
And all the windy clamour of the daws  
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the grass  
There growing longest by the meadow's edge,  
And into many a listless annulet,  
Now over, now bencath her marriage ring,  
Wove and unwove it, till the boy return'd  
And told them of a chamber, and they went;  
Where, after saying to her, " If you will,  
'Call for the woman of the house,' " to which  
She answer'd, " Thanks, my lord ; " the two remain'd  
Apart by all the chamber's width,  
and mute  
As creatures voiceless thro' the fault of birth,  
Or two wild men supporters of a shield,  
Painted, who stare at open space,  
nor glance  
The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along the street,  
And heel against the pavement echoing, burst  
Their drowze ; and either started while the door,  
Push'd from without, drove backward to the wall,  
And midmost of a rout of roisterers, Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,  
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,  
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place, Limours.  
He moving up with pliant courtliness,  
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,

In the mid-warmth of welcome and grapt hand,  
Found Enid with the corner of his eye,  
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.  
Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly cheer  
To feed the sudden guest, and sumptuously  
According to his fashion, bade the host  
Call in what men soever were his friends,  
And feast with these in honour of their earl ;  
" And care not for the cost ; the cost is mine."

And wine and food were brought, and Earl Limours  
Drank till he jested with all ease, and told  
Free tales, and took the word and play'd upon it,  
And made it of two colours ; for his talk,  
When wine and free companions kindled him,  
Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem  
Of fifty facets ; thus he moved the Prince  
To laughter and his comrades to applause.  
Then, when the Prince was merry, ask'd Limours,  
" Your leave, my lord, to cross the room, and speak  
To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
And seems so lonely ? " " My free leave " he said ;  
" Get her to speak : she does not speak to me." Then rose Limours and looking at his feet,  
Like him who tries the bridge he fears may fail,  
Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,  
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisperingly :

"Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,  
 Enid my early and my only love,  
 Enid the loss of whom has turn'd me wild—  
 What chance is this? how is it I see you here?  
 You are in my power at last, are in my power.  
 Yet fear me not: I call mine own self wild,  
 But keep a touch of sweet civility  
 Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.  
 I thought, but that your father came between,  
 In former days you saw me favourably.  
 And if it were so do not keep it back: Make me a little happier: let me know it:  
 Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?  
 Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.  
 And, Enid, you and he, I see it with joy—  
 You sit apart, you do not speak to him,  
 You come with no attendance, page or maid,  
 To serve you—does he love you as of old?  
 For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know  
 'Tho' men may bicker with the things they love,  
 They would not make them laughable in all eyes,  
 Not while they loved them; and your wretched dress,  
 A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks  
 Your story, that this man loves you no more.  
 Your beauty is no beauty to him now: A common chance—right well I know it—pall'd—  
 For I know men: nor will you win him back,  
 For the man's love once gone never returns.  
 But here is one who loves you as of old;

With more exceeding passion than of old:  
 Good, speak the word: my followers ring him round:  
 He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up: They understand: no; I do not mean blood:  
 Nor need you look so scared at what I say:  
 My malice is no deeper than a moat, No stronger than a wall: there is the keep;  
 He shall not cross us more; speak but the word:  
 Or speak it not; but then by Him that made me  
 The one true lover which you ever had,  
 I will make use of all the power I have.  
 O pardon me! the madness of that hour,  
 When first I parted from you, moves me yet."

At this the tender sound of his own voice  
 And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,  
 Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd his eyes,  
 Moist as they were, wine-heated from the feast;  
 And answer'd with such craft as women use,  
 Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance  
 That breaks upon them perilously, and said:

"Earl, if you love me as in former years,  
 And do not practise on me, come with morn,  
 And snatch me from him as by violence;  
 Leave me to-night: I am weary to the death."  
 Low at leave-taking, with his brandish'd plume  
 Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-amorous Earl,  
 And the stout Prince bade him a loud good-night.

He moving homeward babbled to his men,  
How Enid never loved a man but him,  
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

Then breaking his command of silence given,  
She told him all that Earl Limours had said,  
Except the passage that he loved her not ;  
Nor left untold the craft herself had used ;  
But ended with apology so sweet,  
Low-spoken, and of so few words,  
and seem'd  
So justified by that necessity,  
That tho' he thought " was it for him she wept  
In Devon ? " he but gave a wrathful groan,  
Saying " your sweet faces make good fellows fools  
And traitors. Call the host and bid him bring Charger and palfrey." So she glided out  
Among the heavy breathings of the house,  
And like a household Spirit at the walls  
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and return'd :  
Then tending her rough lord, tho' all unask'd,  
In silence, did him service as a squire ;  
Till issuing arm'd he found the host and cried,  
" Thy reckoning, friend ? " and ere he learnt it, " Take Five horses and their armours ; " and the host,  
Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,  
" My lord, I scarce have spent the worth of one ! "  
" You will be all the wealthier " said the Prince,  
And then to Enid, " Forward ! and to-day  
I charge you, Enid, more especially,  
What thing soever you may hear, or see,  
Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use  
To charge you) that you speak not but obey."

And Enid answer'd, " Yea, my lord, I know

Your wish, and would obey ; but riding first,  
I hear the violent threats you do not hear,  
I see the danger which you cannot see :  
Then not to give you warning, that seems hard ;  
Almost beyond me : yet I would obey."

" Yea so," said he, " do it : be not too wise ;  
Seeing that you are wedded to a man, Not quite mismatched with a yawning clown,  
But one with arms to guard his head and yours,  
With eyes to find you out however far,  
And ears to hear you even in his dreams."

With that he turn'd and look'd as keenly at her  
As careful robins eye the delver's toil :  
And that within her, which a wanton fool,  
Or hasty judger would have call'd her guilt,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall,  
And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten broad,  
Led from the territory of false Li-mours  
To the waste earldom of another earl,  
Doorn, whom his shaking vassals call'd the Bull,  
Went Enid with her sullen follower on.  
Once she look'd back, and when she saw him ride  
More near by many a rood than yester-morn,  
It wellnigh made her cheerful ; till Geraint  
Waving an angry hand as who should say

" You watch me," sadden'd all her heart again.  
But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,  
The sound of many a heavily-galloping hoof  
Smote on her ear, and turning round she saw  
Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.  
Then not to disobey her lord's behest,  
And yet to give him warning, for he rode  
As if he heard not, moving back she held  
Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.  
At which the warrior in his obstinacy,  
Because she kept the letter of his word  
Was in a manner pleased, and turning, stood.  
And in the moment after, wild Li-mours,  
Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-cloud  
Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking storm,  
Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,  
And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,  
Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him, and bore  
Down by the length of lance and arm beyond  
The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or dead,  
And overthrew the next that follow'd him,  
And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind,  
But at the flash and motion of the man  
They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal  
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn  
Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot  
Come slipping o'er their shadows on the sand,  
But if a man who stands upon the brink  
But lift a shining hand against the sun,

There is not left the twinkle of a fin  
Betwixt the cressy islets white in  
flower ;  
So, scared but at the motion of the  
man,  
Fled all the boon companions of the  
Earl,  
And left him lying in the public  
way ;  
So vanish friendships only made in  
wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled  
Geraint,  
Who saw the chargers of the two  
that fell  
Start from their fallen lords, and  
wildly fly,  
Mixt with the flyers. " Horse and  
man," he said,  
" All of one mind and all right-honest  
friends !  
Not a hoof left : and I methinks till  
now  
Was honest—paid with horses and  
with arms ;  
I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg :  
And so what say you, shall we strip  
him there  
Your lover ? has your palfrey heart  
enough  
To bear his armour ? shall we fast,  
or dine ?  
No ?—then do you, being right  
honest, pray  
That we may meet the horsemen of  
Earl Doorm,  
I too would still be honest." Thus  
he said :  
And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,  
And answering not one word, she led  
the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful  
loss  
Falls in a far land and he knows it  
not,  
But coming back he learns it, and  
the loss  
So pains him that he sickens nigh to  
death ;  
So fared it with Geraint, who being  
prick'd

In combat with the follower of Li-  
mours,  
Bled underneath his armour secretly,  
And so rode on, nor told his gentle  
wife  
What ail'd him, hardly knowing it  
himself,  
Till his eye darken'd and his helmet  
wagg'd ;  
And at a sudden swerving of the  
road,  
Tho' happily down on a bank of grass  
The Prince, without a word, from his  
horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his  
fall,  
Suddenly came, and at his side all pale  
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings  
of his arms,  
Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue  
eye  
Moisten, till she had lighted on his  
wound,  
And tearing off her veil of faded silk  
Had bared her forehead to the blister-  
ing sun,  
And swathed the hurt that drain'd  
her dear lord's life,  
Then after all was done that hand  
could do,  
She rested, and her desolation came  
Upon her, and she wept beside the  
way.

And many past, but none regarded  
her,  
For in that realm of lawless turbu-  
lence,  
A woman weeping for her murder'd  
mate  
Was cared as much for as a summer  
shower :  
One took him for a victim of Earl  
Doorm,  
Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on  
him :  
Another hurrying past, a man-at-  
arms,  
Rode on a mission to the bandit  
Earl ;  
Half whistling and half singing a  
coarse song,

He drove the dust against her veilless eyes :  
 Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm  
 Before an ever-fancied arrow, made  
 The long way smoke beneath him in his fear ;  
 At which her palfrey whinnying lifted heel,  
 And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,  
 While the great charger stood, grieved like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl Doorn,  
 Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet beard,  
 Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,  
 Came riding with a hundred lances up ;  
 But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,  
 Cried out with a big voice, " What, is he dead ? "  
 " No, no, not dead ! " she answered in all haste.  
 " Would some of your kind people take him up,  
 And bear him hence out of this cruel sun :  
 Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead."

Then said Earl Doorm ; " Well, if he be not dead, Why wail you for him thus ? you seem a child. And be he dead, I count you for a fool ; Your wailing will not quicken him : dead or not, You mar a comely face with idiot tears. Yet, since the face is comely—some of you, Here, take him up, and bear him to our hall : An if he live, we will have him of our band ; And if he die, why earth has earth enough

To hide him. See ye take the charger too, A noble one." He spake, and past away, But left two brawny spearmen, who advanced, Each growling like a dog, when his good bone Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys Who love to vex him eating, and he fears To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it, Gnawing and growling : so the ruffians growl'd, Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man, Their chance of booty from the morning's raid ; Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier, Such as they brought upon their forays out For those that might be wounded ; laid him on it All in the hollow of his shield, and took And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm, (His gentle charger following him unled) And cast him and the bier in which he lay Down on an oaken settle in the hall, And then departed, hot in haste to join Their luckier mates, but growling as before, And cursing their lost time, and the dead man, And their own Earl, and their own souls, and her. They might as well have blest her : she was deaf To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord, There in the naked hall, propping his head,

And chafing his pale hands, and calling to him,  
 And at the last he waken'd from his swoon,  
 And found his own dear bride proping his head,  
 And chafing his faint hands, and calling to him ;  
 And felt the warm tears falling on his face ;  
 And said to his own heart, " she weeps for me :"  
 And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as dead,  
 That he might prove her to the uttermost,  
 And say to his own heart " she weeps for me."  
 But in the falling afternoon return'd  
 The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the hall,  
 His lusty spearmen follow'd him with noise :  
 Each hurling down a heap of things that rang  
 Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,  
 And doff'd his helm : and then there flutter'd in,  
 Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,  
 A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,  
 And mingled with the spearmen : and Earl Doorm  
 Struck with a knife's haft hard against the board,  
 And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his spears.  
 And men brought in whole hogs and quarter beeves,  
 And all the hall was dim with steam of flesh ;  
 And none spake word, but all sat down at once,  
 And ate with tumult in the naked hall,  
 Feeding like horses when you hear them feed ;  
 Till Enid shrank far back into herself, To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.

But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he would,  
 He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and found  
 A damsel drooping in a corner of it. Then he remember'd her, and how she wept ;  
 And out of her there came a power upon him ;  
 And rising on the sudden he said, " Eat ! I never yet beheld a thing so pale. God's curse, it makes me mad to see you weep.  
 Eat ! Look yourself. Good luck had your good man, For were I dead who is it would weep for me ?  
 Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath,  
 Have I beheld a lily like yourself. And so there lived some colour in your cheek,  
 There is not one among my gentlewomen  
 Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.  
 But listen to me, and by me be ruled, And I will do the thing I have not done,  
 For you shall share my earldom with me, girl, And we will live like two birds in one nest,  
 And I will fetch you forage from all fields,  
 For I compel all creatures to my will."  
 He spoke : the brawny spearman let his cheek bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and turning stared ; While some, whose souls the old serpent long had drawn Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd leaf And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's ear What shall not be recorded—women they, Women, or what had been those gracious things, But now desired the humbling of their best,

Yea, would have helped him to it :  
and all at once  
They hated her, who took no thought  
of them,  
But answer'd in low voice, her meek  
head yet  
Drooping, " I pray you of your  
courtesy,  
He being as he is, to let me be."

She spake so low he hardly heard  
her speak,  
But like a mighty patron, satisfied  
With what himself had done so  
graciously;  
Assumed that she had thanked him,  
adding, " yea,  
Eat and be glad, for I account you  
mine."

She answer'd meekly, " How  
should I be glad  
Henceforth in all the world at any-  
thing,  
Until my lord arise and look upon  
me ? "

Here the huge Earl cried out upon  
her talk,  
As all but empty heart and weariness  
And sickly nothing ; suddenly seized  
on her,  
And bare her by main violence to the  
board,  
And thrust the dish before her, cry-  
ing, " Eat."

" No, no," said Enid, vext, " I  
will not eat,  
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,  
And eat with me." " Drink, then,"  
he answer'd. " Here ! "  
(And fill'd a horn with wine and held  
it to her.)  
" Lo ! I myself, when flush'd with  
fight, or hot,  
God's curse, with anger—often I my-  
self,  
Before I well have drunken, scarce  
can eat:  
Drink therefore and the wine will  
change your will."

" Not so," she cried, " by Heaven,  
I will not drink,  
Till my dear lord arise and bid me  
do it,  
And drink with me ; and if he rise no  
more,  
I will not look at wine until I die."

At this he turn'd all red and paced  
his hall,  
Now gnaw'd his under, now his  
upper lip,  
And coming up close to her, said at  
last ;  
" Girl, for I see you scorn my cour-  
tesies,  
Take warning : yonder man is surely  
dead ;  
And I compel all creatures to my will.  
Not eat nor drink ? And wherefore  
wail for one,  
Who put your beauty to this flout  
and scorn  
By dressing it in rags ? Amazed am  
I,  
Beholding how you butt against my  
wish,  
That I forbear you thus : cross me  
no more.  
At least put off to please me this poor  
gown,  
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's  
weed :  
I love that beauty should go beauti-  
fully :  
For see you not my gentlewomen  
here,  
How gay, how suited to the house or  
one,  
Who loves that beauty should go  
beautifully !  
Rise therefore ; robe yourself in this :  
obey."

He spoke, and one among his  
gentlewomen  
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign  
loom,  
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely  
blue  
Play'd into green, and thicker down  
the front

With jewels than the sward with  
drops of dew,  
When all night long a cloud clings to  
the hill,  
And with the dawn ascending lets the  
day  
Strike where it clung : so thickly shone  
the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be  
moved  
Than hardest tyrants in their day of  
power,  
With life-long injuries burning un-  
avenged,  
And now their hour has come ; and  
Enid said :

" In this poor gown my dear lord  
found me first,  
And loved me serving in my father's  
hall :  
In this poor gown I rode with him to  
court,  
And ther the Queen array'd me like  
the sun :  
In this poor gown he bade me clothe  
myself,  
When now we rode upon this fatal  
quest  
Of honour, where no honour can be  
gain'd :  
And this poor gown I will not cast  
aside  
Until himself arise a living man,  
And bid me cast it. I have griefs  
enough :  
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me  
be :

I never loved, can never love but  
him :  
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentle-  
ness  
He being as he is, to let me be."

Then strode the brute Earl up and  
down his hall,  
And took his russet beard between  
his teeth :  
Last, coming up quite close, and in  
his mood  
Crying, " I count it of no more avail,  
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle  
with you ;

Take my salute," unknightly with  
flat hand,  
However lightly, smoto her on the  
cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helpless-  
ness,  
And since she thought, " he had not  
dared to do it,  
Except he surely knew my lord was  
dead,"  
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter  
cry,  
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,  
Which sees the trapper coming thro'  
the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping  
at his sword,  
(It lay beside him in the hollow  
shield),  
Made but a single bound, and with a  
sweep of it  
Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and  
like a ball  
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the  
floor.  
So died Earl Doorm by him he  
counted dead.  
And all the men and women in the  
hall  
Rose when they saw the dead man  
rise, and fled  
Yelling as from a spectre, and the  
two  
Were left alone together, and he  
said :

" Enid, I have used you worse than  
that dead man ;  
Done you more wrong : we both have  
undergone  
That trouble which has left me thrice  
your own :  
Henceforward I will rather die than  
doubt.  
And here I lay this penance on myself,  
Not tho' mine own ears heard you  
yester-morn—  
You thought me sleeping, but I heard  
you say,  
I heard you say, that you were no  
true wife :

I swear I will not ask your meaning  
in it :  
I do believe yourself against yourself,  
And will henceforward rather die  
than doubt."

And Enid could not say one tender word,  
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart :  
She only prayed him, " Fly, they will return  
And slay you ; fly, your charger is without,  
My palfrey lost." " Then, Enid, shall you ride  
Behind me." " Yea," said Enid,  
" let us go." And moving out they found the stately horse,  
Who now no more a vassal to the thief,  
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,  
Neigh'd with all gladness as they came, and stoop'd  
With a low whinny toward the pair : and she  
Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,  
Glad also ; then Geraint upon the horse  
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his foot  
She set her own and climb'd ; he turn'd his face  
And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast her arms  
About him, and at once they rode away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise  
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,  
Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind  
Than lived thro' her, who in that perilous hour  
Put hand to hand beneath her husband's heart,  
And felt him hers again : she did not weep.

But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist  
Like that which kept the heart of Eden green  
Before the useful trouble of the rain :  
Yet not so misty were her meek blue eyes  
As not to see before them on the path,  
Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,  
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid his lance  
In rest, and made as if to fall upon him.  
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of blood,  
She, with her mind all full of what had chanced,  
Shriek'd to the stranger, " Slay not a dead man ! "  
" The voice of Enid," said the knight ; but she,  
Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,  
Was moved so much the more, and shriek'd again,  
" O cousin, slay not him who gave you life."  
And Edyrn moving frankly forward spake :  
" My lord Geraint, I greet you with all love :  
I took you for a bandit knight of Doorm ;  
And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon him,  
Who love you, Prince, with something of the love  
Wherewith we love the Heaven that chastens us.  
For once, when I was up so high in pride  
That I was halfway down the slope to Hell,  
By overthrowing me you threw me higher.  
Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table Round,  
And since I knew this Earl, when I myself  
Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,  
I come the mouthpiece of our King to Doorm

(The King is close behind me) bidding him  
Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,  
Submit, and hear the judgment of the King."

" He hears the judgment of the King of Kings,"  
Cried the wan Prince; " and lo the powers of Doorm  
Are scatter'd," and he pointed to the field,  
Where, huddled here and there on mound and knoll,  
Were men and women staring and aghast,  
While some yet fled; and then he plainlier told  
How the huge Earl lay slain within his hall.  
But when the knight besought him,  
" Follow me, Prince, to the camp, and in the King's own ear  
Speak what has chanced; you surely have endured  
Strange chances here alone;" that other flush'd,  
And hung his head, and halted in reply,  
Fearing the mild face of the blameless King,  
And after madness acted question ask'd:  
Till Edyrrn crying, " If you will not go  
To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,"  
" Enough," he said, " I fol'ow," and they went.  
But Enid in their going had two fears,  
One from the bandit scatter'd in the field,  
And one from Edyrrn. Every now and then,  
When Edyrrn rein'd his charger at her side,  
She shrank a little. In a hollow land,  
From which old fires have broken, men may fear  
Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said :

" Fair and dear cousin, you that most had cause  
To fear me, fear no longer, I am changed.  
Yourself were first the blameless cause to make  
My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood  
Break into furious flame; being repulsed  
By Ynol and yourself, I schemed and wrought  
Until I overturn'd him; then set up  
(With one main purpose ever at my heart)  
My haughty jousts, and took a paramour;  
Did her mock-honour as the fairest fair,  
And, toppling over all antagonism,  
So wax'd in pride, that I believed myself  
Unconquerable, for I was well-nigh mad:  
And, but for my main purpose in these jousts,  
I should have slain your father, seized yourself.  
I lived in hope that sometime you would come  
To these my lists with him whom best you loved;  
And there, poor cousin, with your meek blue eyes,  
The truest eyes that ever answer'd heaven,  
Behold the overturn and trample on him.  
Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray'd to me,  
I should not less have kill'd him.  
And you came,—  
But once you came,—and with your own true eyes  
Beheld the man you loved (I speak as one  
Speaks of a service done him) overthrow  
My proud self, and my purpose three years old.  
And set his foot upon me, and give me life.  
There was I broken down; there was I saved:

Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating  
the life  
He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.  
And all the penance the Queen laid  
upon me  
Was but to rest awhile within her  
court;  
Where first as sullen as a beast new-  
caged,  
And waiting to be treated like a wolf,  
Because I knew my deeds were known,  
I found,  
Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,  
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,  
Manners so kind, yet stately, such a  
grace  
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began  
To glance behind me at my former  
life,  
And find that it had been the wolf's  
indeed:  
And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the  
high saint,  
Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,  
Subdued me somewhat to that gentle-  
ness,  
Which, when it weds with manhood,  
makes a man.  
And you were often there about the  
Queen,  
But saw me not, or mark'd not if you  
saw;  
Nor did I care or dare to speak with  
you,  
But kept myself aloof till I was  
changed;  
And fear not cousin; I am changed  
indeed."

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,  
Like simple noble natures, credulous  
Of what they long for, good in friend  
or foe,  
There most in those who most have  
done them ill.  
And when they reach'd the camp the  
King himself  
Advanced to greet them, and be-  
holding her  
Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a  
word,  
But went apart with Edyrn, whom  
he held  
In converse for a little, and return'd,

And, gravely smiling, lifted her from  
horse,  
And kiss'd her with all pureness,  
brother-like,  
And show'd an empty tent allotted  
her,  
And glancing for a minute, till he  
saw her  
Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and  
said :

" Prince, when of late you pray'd  
me for my leave  
To move to your own land, and there  
defend  
Your marches, I was prick'd with  
some reproof,  
As one that let foul wrong stagnate  
and be,  
By having look'd too much thro' alien  
eyes,  
And wrought too long with delegated  
hands,  
Not used mine own: but now behold  
me come  
To cleanse this common sewer of all  
my realm,  
With Edyrn and with others: have  
you look'd  
At Edyrn? have you seen how nobly  
changed?  
This work of his is great and wonder-  
ful,  
His very face with change of heart  
is changed.  
The world will not believe a man re-  
pents:  
And this wise world of ours is mainly  
right.  
Full seldom does a man repent, or use  
Both grace and will to pick the vicious  
quitch  
Of blood and custom wholly out of  
him,  
And make all clean, and plant him-  
self afresh.  
Edyrn has done it, weeding all his  
heart  
As I will weed this land before I go.  
I, therefore, made him of our Table  
Round,  
Not rashly, but have prov'd him  
everyway  
One of our noblest, our most valorous,

Sanest and most obedient : and in-deed  
 This work of Edyrn wrought upon himself  
 After a life of violence, seems to me  
 A thousand-fold more great and wonderful  
 Than if some knight of mine, risking his life,  
 My subject with my subjects under him,  
 Should make an onslaught single on a realm  
 Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,  
 And were himself nigh wounded to the death."

To keep him bright and clean as here-tofore,  
 He rooted out the slothful officer  
 Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at wrong,  
 And in their chairs set up a stronger race  
 With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men  
 To till the wastes, and moving every-where  
 Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,  
 And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the land.

So spake the King : low bow'd the Prince, and felt  
 His work was neither great nor wonderful,  
 And past to Enid's tent ; and thither came  
 The King's own leech to look into his hurt ;  
 And Enid tended on him there ; and there  
 Her constant motion round him, and the breath  
 Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,  
 Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood  
 With deeper and with ever deeper love,  
 As the south-west that blowing Bala lake  
 Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,  
 The blameless King went forth and cast his eyes  
 On whom his father Uther left in charge  
 Long since, to guard the justice of the King :  
 He look'd and found them wanting ; and as now  
 Men weed the white horse on the Berkshire hills

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they past  
 With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk. There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,  
 And clothed her in apparel like the day.  
 And tho' Geraint could never take again  
 That comfort from their converse which he took  
 Before the Queen's fair name was breathed upon,  
 He rested well content that all was well.  
 Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,  
 And fifty knights rode with them to the shores  
 Of Sevorn, and they past to their own land.  
 And there he kept the justice of the King  
 So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts  
 Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died :  
 And being ever foremost in the chase,  
 And victor at the tilt and tourna-ment,  
 They call'd him the great Prince and man of men.  
 But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call  
 Enid the Fair, a grateful people named  
 Enid the Good ; and in their halls arose

The cry of children, Enids and  
Geraints  
Of times to be ; nor did he doubt  
her more  
But rested in her fēalty, till he  
crown'd  
A happy life with a fair death, and fell  
Against the heathen of the Northern  
Sea  
In battle, fighting for the blameless  
King.

## VIVIEN

A STORM was coming, but the winds  
were still,  
And in the wild woods of Broceliande,  
Before an oak, so hollow huge and  
old  
It look'd a tower of ruin'd mason-  
work,  
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's  
court :  
She hated all the knights, and heard  
in thought  
Their lavish comment when her name  
was named.  
For once, when Arthur walking all  
alone,  
Vext at a rumour rife about the  
Queen,  
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted  
fair,  
Would fain have wrought upon his  
cloudy mood  
With reverent eyes mock-loyal,  
shaken voice,  
And flutter'd adoration, and at last  
With dark sweet hints of some who  
prized him more  
Than who should prize him most ; at  
which the King  
Had gazed upon her blankly and gone  
by :  
But one had watch'd, and had not held  
his peace :  
It made the laughter of an afternoon  
That Vivien should attempt the  
blameless King.

And after that, she set herself to gain  
Him, the most famous man of all  
those times,  
Merlin, who knew the range of all  
their arts,  
Had built the King his havens, ships,  
and halls,  
Was also Bard, and knew the starry  
heavens ;  
The people called him Wizard ; whom  
at first  
She play'd about with slight and  
sprightly talk  
And vivid smiles, and faintly  
venom'd points  
Of slander, glancing here and grazing  
there ;  
And yielding to his kindlier moods,  
the Seer  
Would watch her at her petulance,  
and play,  
Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable,  
and laugh  
As those that watch a kitten ; thus  
he grew  
Tolerant of what he half disdain'd,  
and she,  
Perceiving that she was but half  
disdain'd,  
Began to break her sports with grave  
fits,  
Turn red or pale, would often when  
they met  
Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
With such a fixt devotion, that the  
old man,  
Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and  
at times  
Would flatter his own wish in age for  
love,  
And half believe her true : for thus  
at times  
He waver'd ; but that other clung to  
him,  
Fixt in her will, and so the seasons  
went.  
Then fell upon him a great melan-  
choly ;  
And leaving Arthur's court he gain'd  
the beach ;  
There found a little boat, and stept  
into it ;  
And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd  
her not.

She took the helm and he the sail ;  
 the boat  
 Drave with a sudden wind across the  
 deeps,  
 And touching Breton sands, they  
 disembark'd.  
 And then she follow'd Merlin all the  
 way,  
 Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande,  
 For Merlin once had told her of a  
 charm,  
 The which if any wrought on any one  
 With woven paces and with waving  
 arms,  
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd  
 to lie  
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow  
 tower,  
 From which was no escape for ever-  
 more ;  
 And none could find that man for  
 evermore,  
 Nor could he see but him who wrought  
 the charm  
 Coming and going, and he lay as dead  
 And lost to life and use and name and  
 fame.  
 And Vivien ever sought to work the  
 charm  
 Upon the great Enchanter of the  
 Time,  
 As fancying that her glory would be  
 great  
 According to his greatness whom she  
 quench'd.  
  
 There lay she all her length and  
 kiss'd his feet,  
 As if in deepest reverence and in love,  
 A twist of gold was round her hair ; a  
 robe  
 Of samite without price, that more  
 express  
 Than hid her, clung about her lissome  
 limbs,  
 In colour like the satin-shining palm  
 On sallows in the windy gleams of  
 March :  
 And while she kiss'd them, crying,  
 " Trample me,  
 Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro'  
 the world,  
 And I will pay you worship ' tread  
 me down

And I will kiss you for it ; " he was  
 mute :  
 So dark a forethought roll'd about  
 his brain,  
 As on a dull day in an Ocean cave  
 The blind wave feeling round his long  
 sea-hall  
 In silence : wherefore, when she  
 lifted up  
 A face of sad appeal, and spake and  
 said,  
 " O Merlin, do you love me ? " and  
 again,  
 " O Merlin, do you love me ? " and  
 once more,  
 " Great Master, do you love me ? "  
 he was mute.  
 And lissome Vivien, holding by his  
 heel,  
 Writthed toward him,滑ed up his  
 knee and sat,  
 Behind his ankle twined her hollow  
 feet  
 Together, curved an arm about his  
 neck,  
 Clung like a snake ; and letting her  
 left hand  
 Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a  
 leaf,  
 Made with her right a comb of pearl  
 to part  
 The lists of such a beard as youth  
 gone out  
 Had left in ashes : then he spoke and  
 said,  
 Not looking at her, " who are wise in  
 love  
 Love most, say least," and Vivien  
 answer'd quick,  
 " I saw the little elf-god eyeless once  
 In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot :  
 But neither eyes nor tongue—O  
 stupid child !  
 Yet you are wise who say it ; let me  
 think  
 Silence is wisdom : I am silent then  
 And ask no kiss ; " then adding all at  
 once,  
 " And lo, I clothe myself with wis-  
 dom," drew  
 The vast and shaggy mantle of his  
 beard  
 Across her neck and bosom to her  
 knee,

And call'd herself a gilded summer fly  
 Caught in a great old tyrant spider's  
 web,  
 Who meant to eat her up in that wild  
 wood  
 Without one word. So Vivien call'd  
 herself,  
 But rather seem'd a lovely baleful  
 star  
 Veil'd in gray vapour; till he sadly  
 smiled:  
 "To what request for what strange  
 boon," he said,  
 "Are these your pretty tricks and  
 fooleries,  
 O Vivien, the preamble? yet my  
 thanks,  
 For these have broken up my melan-  
 choly."

And Vivien answer'd smiling  
 saucily,  
 "What, O my Master, have you  
 found your voice?  
 I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks  
 at last!  
 But yesterday you never open'd lip,  
 Except indeed to drink: no cup had  
 we:  
 In mine own lady palms I cull'd the  
 spring  
 That gather'd trickling dropwise  
 from the cleft,  
 And made a pretty cup of both my  
 hands  
 And offer'd you it kneeling: then you  
 drank  
 And knew no more, nor gave me one  
 poor word;  
 O no more thanks than might a goat  
 have given  
 With no more sign of reverence than  
 a beard.  
 And when we halted at that other  
 well,  
 And I was faint to swooning, and you  
 lay  
 Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of  
 those  
 Deep meadows we had traversed, did  
 you know  
 That Vivien bathed your feet before  
 her own?

And yet no thanks: and all thro'  
 this wild wood  
 And all this morning when I fondled  
 you:  
 Boon, yes, there was a boon, one not  
 so strange—  
 How had I wrong'd you? surely you  
 are wise,  
 But such a silence is more wise than  
 kind."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers  
 and said;  
 "O did you never lie upon the shore,  
 And watch the curl'd white of the  
 coming wave  
 Glass'd in the slippery sand before  
 it breaks?  
 Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasur-  
 able,  
 Dark in the glass of some presageful  
 mood,  
 Had I for three days seen, ready to  
 fall.  
 And then I rose and fled from Arthur's  
 court  
 To break the mood. You follow'd  
 me unask'd;  
 And when I look'd, and saw you  
 following still,  
 My mind involved yourself the  
 nearest thing  
 In that mind-mist: for shall I tell  
 you truth?  
 You seem'd that wave about to break  
 upon me  
 And sweep me from my hold upon  
 the world.  
 My use and name and fame. Your  
 pardon, child.  
 Your pretty sports have brighten'd  
 all again.  
 And ask your boon, for boon I owe  
 you thrice,  
 Once for wrong done you by confu-  
 sion, next  
 For thanks it seems till now neglected,  
 last  
 For these your dainty gambols:  
 wherefore ask;  
 And take this boon so strange and  
 not so strange."

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully ;  
 " O not so strange as my long asking it,  
 Nor yet so strange as you yourself are strange,  
 Nor half so strange as that dark mood of yours.  
 I ever fear'd you were not wholly mine ;  
 And see, yourself have own'd you did me wrong.  
 The people call you prophet : let it be :  
 But not of those that can expound themselves.  
 Take Vivien for expounder ; she will call  
 That three-days-long presageful gloom of yours  
 No presage, but the same mistrustful mood  
 That makes you seem less noble than yourself,  
 Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,  
 Now ask'd again : for see you not, dear love,  
 That such a mood as that, which lately gloom'd  
 Your fancy when you saw me following you,  
 Must make me fear still more you are not mine,  
 Must make me yearn still more to prove you mine,  
 And make me wish still more to learn this charm  
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
 As proof of trust. O, Merlin, teach it me.  
 The charm so taught will charm us both to rest.  
 For, grant me some slight power upon your fate,  
 I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,  
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing you mine.  
 And therefore be as great as you are named,  
 Not muffled round with selfish reticence.  
 How hard you look and how denyingly !

O, if you think this wickedness in me,  
 That I should prove it on you unawares,  
 To make you lose your use and name and fame,  
 That makes me most indignant ; then our bond  
 Had best be loosed for ever : but think or not,  
 By Heaven that hears I tell you the clean truth,  
 As clean as blood of babes, as white as milk :  
 O Merlin, may this earth, if ever 1,  
 If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,  
 Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a dream,  
 Have tript on such conjectural treachery—  
 May this hard earth cleave to the Nadir hell  
 Down, down, and close again, and nip me flat,  
 If I be such a traitress. Yield my boon,  
 Till which I scarce can yield you all I am ;  
 And grant my re-iterated wish,  
 The great proof of your love : because I think,  
 However wise, you hardly know me yet."

And Merlin loosed his hand from hers and said,  
 " I never was less wise, however wise,  
 Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of trust,  
 Than when I told you first of such a charm.  
 Yea, if you talk of trust I tell you this,  
 Too much I trusted, when I told you that,  
 And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd man  
 Thro' woman the first hour ; for howso'er  
 In children a great curiousness be well,  
 Who have to learn themselves and all the world,

In you, that are no child, for still I  
find  
Your face is practised, when I spell  
the lines,  
I call it,—well, I will not call it vice:  
But since you name yourself the  
summer fly,  
I well could wish a cobweb for the  
gnat,  
That settles, beaten back, and beaten  
back  
Settles, till one could yield for weariness:  
But since I will not yield to give you  
power  
Upon my life and use and name and  
fame,  
Why will you never ask some other  
boon?  
Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too  
much."

And Vivien, like the tenderest-  
hearted maid  
That ever bided tryst at village stile,  
Made answer, either eyelid wet with  
tears.  
" Nay, master, be not wrathful with  
your maid;  
Caress her: let her feel herself for-  
given  
Who feels no heart to ask another  
boon.  
I think you hardly know the tender  
rhyme  
Of 'trust me not at all or all in all.'  
I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing  
it once,  
And it shall answer for me. Listen  
to it.

' In Love, if Love be Love, if Love  
be ours,  
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal  
powers:  
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

' It is the little rift within the lute,  
That by and by will make the music  
mute,  
And ever widening slowly silence all.

' The little rift within the lover's  
lute,

Or little pitted speck in garner'd  
fruit,  
That rotting inward slowly moulders  
all.

' It is not worth the keeping: let  
it go:  
But shall it? answer, darling, answer,  
no.  
And trust me not at all or all in all.'

O, master, do you love my tender  
rhyme?"

And Merlin look'd and half believed  
her true,  
So tender was her voice, so fair her face,  
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind  
her tears  
Like sunlight on the plain behind a  
shower:  
And yet he answer'd half indignantly.

" Far other was the song that once  
I heard  
By this huge oak, sung nearly where  
we sit:  
For here we met, some ten or twelve  
of us,  
To chase a creature that was current  
then  
In these wild woods, the hart with  
golden horns.  
It was the time when first the ques-  
tion rose

About the founding of a Table Round,  
That was to be, for love of God and  
men

And noble deeds, the flower of all the  
world.  
And each incited each to noble deeds.  
And while we waited, one, the  
youngest of us,  
We could not keep him silent, out he  
flash'd,  
And into such a song, such fire for  
fame,  
Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming  
down  
To such a stern and iron-clashing close,  
That when he stopt we long'd to hurl  
together,  
And should have done it; but the  
beauteous beast

Scared by the noise upstarted at our feet,  
 And like a silver shadow slipt away  
 Thro' the dim land ; and all day long  
 we rode  
 Thro' the dim land against a rushing wind,  
 That glorious roundel echoing in our ears,  
 And chased the flashes of his golden horns  
 Until they vanish'd by the fairy well  
 That laughs at iron—as our warriors did—  
 Where children cast their pins and nails, and cry,  
 'Laugh, little well,' but touch it with a sword,  
 It buzzes wildly round the point ; and there  
 We lost him : such a noble song was that.  
 But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet rhyme,  
 I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,  
 Were proving it on me, and that I lay  
 And felt them slowly ebbing, name and fame."

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully :  
 " O mine have ebb'd away for evermore,  
 And all thro' following you to this wild wood,  
 Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.  
 Lo now, what hearts have men ! they never mount  
 As high as woman in her selfless mood.  
 And touching fame, how'er you scorn my song,  
 Take one verse more—the lady speaks it—this :

' My name, once mine, now thine,  
 is closerier mine,  
 For fame, could fame be mine, that fame were thine,  
 And shame, could shame be thine,  
 that shame were mine.  
 So trust me not at all or all in all.'

" Says she not well ? and there is more—this rhyme  
 Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the Queen,  
 That burst in dancing, and the pearls were spilt ;  
 Some lost, some stolen, some as relics kept.  
 But nevermore the same two sister pearls  
 Ran down the silken thread to kiss each other  
 On her white neck—so is it with this rhyme :  
 It lives dispersedly in many hands, And every minstrel sings it differently ;  
 Yet is there one true line, the pearl of pearls ;  
 ' Man dreams of Fame while woman wakes to love.'  
 True : Love, tho' Love were of the grossest, carves  
 A portion from the solid present, eats And uses, careless of the rest ; but Fame,  
 The Fame that follows death is nothing to us ;  
 And what is Fame in life but half-disfame,  
 And counterchanged with darkness ? you yourself  
 Know well that Envy calls you Devil's son,  
 And since you seem the Master of all Art,  
 They fain would make you Master of all Vice."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and said,  
 " I once was looking for a magic weed,  
 And found a fair young squire who sat alone,  
 Had carved himself a knightly shield of wood,  
 And then was painting on it fancied arms,  
 Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun In dexter chief ; the scroll ' I follow fame.'  
 And speaking not, but leaning over him,

I took his brush and blotted out the bird,  
And made a Gardener putting in a graft,  
With this for motto, ' Rather use than fame.'  
You should have seen him blush : but afterwards  
He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,  
For you, methinks you think you love me well ;  
For me, I love you somewhat ; rest : and Love  
Should have some rest and pleasure in himself,  
Not ever be too curious for a boon,  
Too prurient for a proof against the grain  
Of him you say you love : but Fame with men,  
Being but ampler means to serve mankind,  
Should have small rest or pleasure in herself,  
But work as vassal to the larger love,  
That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.  
Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame again  
Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my boon !  
What other ? for men sought to prove me vile,  
Because I wish'd to give them greater minds :  
And then did Envy call me Devil's son :  
The sick weak beast seeking to help herself  
By striking at her better, miss'd, and brought  
Her own claw back, and wounded her own heart.  
Sweet were the days when I was all unknown,  
But when my name was lifted up, the storm  
Broke on the mountain and I cared not for it.  
Right well know I that Fame is half-disfame,  
Yet needs must work my work. That other fame,

To one at least, who hath not children, vague,  
The cackle of the unborn about the grave,  
I cared not for it : a single misty star,  
Which is the second in a line of stars  
That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,  
I never gazed upon it but I dreamt  
Of some vast charm concluded in that star  
To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if I fear,  
Giving you power upon me thro' this charm,  
That you might play me falsely, having power,  
However well you think you love me now  
(As sons of kings loving in pupilage  
Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to power)  
I rather dread the loss of use than fame ;  
If you—and not so much from wickedness,  
As some wild turn of anger, or a mood  
Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,  
To keep me all to your own self, or else  
Asuddenspurt of woman's jealousy,—  
Should try this charm on whom you say you love."

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in wrath.  
" Have I not sworn ? I am not trusted. Good !  
Well, hide it, hide it ; I shall find it out ;  
And being found take heed of Vivien. A woman and not trusted, doubtless I  
Might feel some sudden turn of anger born  
Of your misfaith ; and your fine epithet  
Is accurate too, for this full love of mine  
Without the full heart back may merit well  
Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,

My daily wonder is, I love at all,  
And as to woman's jealousy, O why  
not?

O to what end, except a jealous one,  
And one to make me jealous if I love,  
Was this fair charm invented by  
yourself?

I well believe that all about this  
world

You cage a buxom captive here and  
there,

Closed in the four walls of a hollow  
tower

From which is no escape for ever-  
more."

Then the great Master merrily  
answer'd her.

"Full many a love in loving youth  
was mine,

I needed then no charm to keep them  
mine

But youth and love; and that full  
heart of yours

Whereof you prattle, may now assure  
you mine;

So live uncharm'd. For those who  
wrought it first,

The wrist is parted from the hand  
that waved,

The feet unmortised from their ankle-  
bones

Who paced it, ages back: but will  
you hear

The legend as in guerdon for your  
rhyme?

"There lived a king in the most  
Eastern East,

Less old than I, yet older, for my  
blood

Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.  
A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,  
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty  
nameless isles;

And passing one, at the high peep of  
dawn,

He saw two cities in a thousand  
boats

All fighting for a woman on the sea.  
And pushing his black craft among  
them all,

He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought  
her off,

With loss of half his people arrow-  
slain;

A maid so smooth, so white, so won-  
derful,

They said a light came from her when  
she moved:

And since the pirate would not yield  
her up,

The King impaled him for his piracy;  
Then made her Queen: but those  
isle-nurtur'd eyes

Waged such unwilling tho' successful  
war

On all the youth, they sicken'd;  
councils thinn'd,

And armies waned, for magnet-like  
she drew

The rustiest iron of old fighters'  
hearts;

And beasts themselves would wor-  
ship; camels knelt

Unbidden, and the brutes of moun-  
tain back

That carry kings in castles, bow'd  
black knees

Of homage, ringing with their ser-  
pent hands,

To make her smile, her golden ankle-  
bells.

What wonder, being jealous, that he  
sent

His horns of proclamation out thro'  
all

The hundred under-kingdoms that he  
sway'd

To find a wizard who might teach the  
King

Some charm, which being wrought  
upon the Queen

Might keep her all his own: to such  
a one

He promised more than ever king has  
given,

A league of mountain full of golden  
mines,

A province with a hundred miles of  
coast,

A palace and a princess, all for him:  
But on all those who tried and fail'd,

the King

Pronounced a dismal sentence, mean-  
ing by it

To keep the list low and pretenders  
back,

Or like a king, not to be trifled with—  
Their heads should moulder on the  
city gates.

And many tried and fail'd, because  
the charm  
Of nature in her overbore their own :  
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on  
the walls :  
And many weeks a troop of carrion  
crows  
Hung like a cloud above the gateway  
towers."

And Vivien breaking in upon him,  
said :  
" I sit and gather honey ; yet, me-  
thinks,  
Your tongue has tript a little : ask  
yourself.  
The lady never made *unwilling* war  
With those fine eyes : she had her  
pleasure in it,  
And made her good man jealous with  
good cause.  
And lived there neither dame nor  
damsel then  
Wroth at a lover's loss ? were all as  
tame,  
I mean, as noble, as their Queen was  
fair ?  
Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,  
Or pinch a murderous dust into her  
drink,  
Or make her paler with a poison'd  
rose ?  
Well, those were not our days : but  
did they find  
A wizard ? Tell me, was he like to  
thee ? "

She ceased, and made her lithe  
arm round his neck  
Tighten, and then drew back, and  
let her eyes  
Speak for her, glowing on him, like  
a bride's  
On her new lord, her own, the first of  
men.

He answer'd laughing, " Nay, not  
like to me.  
At last they found—his foragers for  
charms—  
A little glassy-headed hairless man,

Who lived alone in a great wild on  
grass ;  
Read but one book, and ever reading  
grew  
So grated down and filed away with  
thought,  
So lean his eycs were monstrous ;  
while the skin  
Clung but to crate and basket, ribs  
and spine.  
And since he kept his mind on one  
sole aim,  
Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor  
tasted flesh,  
Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the  
wall  
That sunders ghosts and shadow-  
casting men  
Became a crystal, and he saw them  
thro' it,  
And heard their voices talk behind  
the wall,  
And learnt their elemental secrets,  
powers  
And forces ; often o'er the sun's  
bright eye  
Drew the vast eyelid of an inky  
cloud,  
And lash'd it at the base with slanting  
storm ;  
Or in the noon of mist and driving  
rain,  
When the lake whiten'd and the pine-  
wood roar'd,  
And the cairn'd mountain was a  
shadow, sunn'd  
The world to peace again : here was  
the man.  
And so by force they dragg'd him to  
the King.  
And then he taught the King to  
charm the Queen  
In such-wise, that no man could see  
her more,  
Nor saw she save the King, who  
wrought the charm,  
Coming and going, and she lay as  
dead,  
And lost all use of life : but when the  
King  
Made proffer of the league of golden  
mines,  
The province with a hundred miles of  
coast,

The palace and the princess, that old man  
Went back to his old wild, and lived on grass,  
And vanish'd, and his book came down to me."

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily;  
" You have the book: the charm is written in it:  
Good: take my counsel: let me know it at once:  
For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,  
With each chest lock'd and padlock'd thirty-fold,  
And whelm all this beneath as vast a mound  
As after furious battle turfs the slain  
On some wild down above the windy deep,  
I yet should strike upon a sudden means  
To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm:  
Then, if I tried it, who should blame me then?"

And smiling as a Master smiles at one  
That is not of his school, nor any school  
But that where blind and naked Ignorance  
Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,  
On all things all day long; he answer'd her.

" You read the book, my pretty Vivien!  
O ay, it is but twenty pages long,  
But every page having an ample marge,  
And every marge enclosing in the midst  
A square of text that looks a little blot,  
The text no larger than the limbs of fleas;  
And every square of text an awful charm,  
Writ in a language that has long gone by.

So long, that mountains have arisen since  
With cities on their flanks—you read the book!  
And every margin scribbled, crost, and cramm'd  
With comment, densest condensation, hard  
To mind and eye; but the long sleepless nights  
Of my long life have made it easy to me.  
And none can read the text, not even I;  
And none can read the comment but myself;  
And in the comment did I find the charm.  
O, the results are simple; a mere child  
Might use it to the harm of any one,  
And never could undo it: ask no more:  
For tho' you should not prove it upon me,  
But keep that oath you swore, you might, perchance,  
Assay it on some one of the Table Round,  
And all because you dream they babble of you."

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said:  
" What dare the full-fed liars say of me?  
They ride abroad redressing human wrongs!  
They sit with knife in meat and wine in horn.  
They bound to holy vows of chastity!  
Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.  
But you are man, you well can understand  
The shame that cannot be explain'd for shame.  
Not one of all the drove should touch me: swine!"

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her words.  
" You breathe but accusation vast and vague,

Spleen-born, I think, and proofless.  
If you know,  
Set up the charge you know, to stand  
or fall ! "

And Vivien answer'd frowning  
wrathfully.  
" O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence,  
him  
Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er  
his wife  
And two fair babes, and went to dis-  
tant lands ;  
Was one year gone, and on returning  
found  
Not two but three : there lay the  
reckling, one  
But one hour old ! What said the  
happy sire ?  
A seven months' babe had been a  
truer gift.  
Those twelve sweet moons confused  
his fatherhood."

Then answer'd Merlin " Nay, I  
know the tale.  
Sir Valence wedded with an outland  
dame :  
Some cause had kept him sunder'd  
from his wife :  
One child they had : it lived with  
her : she died  
His kinsman travelling on his own  
affair  
Was charged by Valence to bring  
home the child.  
He brought, not found it therefore :  
take the truth.

" O ay," said Vivien, " overtrue a  
tale.  
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagra-  
more,  
That ardent man ? ' to pluck the  
flower in season ; '  
So says the song, ' I trow it is no  
treason.'  
O Master, shall we call him overquick  
To crop his own sweet rose before the  
hour ? "

And Merlin answer'd " Overquick  
are you

To catch a lothly plume fall'n from  
the wing  
Of that foul bird of rapine whose  
whole prey  
Is man's good name : he never  
wrong'd his bride.  
I know the tale. An angry gust of  
wind  
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-  
room'd  
And many-corridor'd complexities  
Of Arthur's palace : then he found a  
door  
And darkling felt the sculptured orna-  
ment  
That wreathen round it made it seem  
his own ;  
And wearied out made for the couch  
and slept,  
A stainless man beside a stainless  
maid ;  
And either slept, nor knew of other  
there ;  
Till the high dawn piercing the royal  
rose  
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd  
chastely down,  
Blushing upon them blushing, and at  
once  
He rose without a word and parted  
from her :  
But when the thing was blazed about  
the court,  
The brute world howling forced them  
into bonds,  
And as it chanced they are happy,  
being pure."

" O ay," said Vivien, " that were  
likely too.  
What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale  
And of the horrid foulness that he  
wrought,  
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb  
of Christ,  
Or some black wether of St. Satan's  
fold.  
What, in the precincts of the chapel-  
yard,  
Among the knightly brasses of the  
graves,  
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the  
dead ! "

And Merlin answer'd careless of her charge.  
 "A sober man is Percivale and pure ;  
 But once in life was fluster'd with new wine,  
 Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard ;  
 Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught  
 And meant to stamp him with her master's mark ;  
 And that he sinn'd, is not believable ;  
 For, look upon his face !—but if he sinn'd,  
 The sin that practice burns into the blood,  
 And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,  
 Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be :  
 Or else were he, the holy king, whose hymns  
 Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.  
 But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye more ? "

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in wrath ;  
 "O ay ; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend ?  
 Traitor or true ? that commerce with the Queen,  
 I ask you, is it clamour'd by the child, Or whisper'd in the corner ? do you know it ? "

To which he answer'd sadly, " Yea, I know it.  
 Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first, To fetch her, and she took him for the King ;  
 So fixt her fancy on him : let him be, But have you no one word of loyal praise  
 For Arthur, blameless King and stainless man ? "

She answer'd with a low and chuckling laugh ;  
 "Him ? is he man at all, who knows and winks ?  
 Sees what his fair bride is and does, and winks ?

By which the good king means to blind himself, And blinds himself and all the Table Round To all the foulness that they work. Myself Could call him (were it not for womanhood) The pretty, popular name such manhood earns, Could call him the main cause of all their crime ; Yea, were he not crown'd king, coward, and fool."

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing, said ;  
 "O true and tender ! O my liege and king !  
 O selfless man and stainless gentleman,  
 Who wouldst against thine own eye-witness fain Have all men true and leal, all women pure ;  
 How, in the mouths of base interpreters, From over-fineness not intelligible To things with every sense as false and foul As the poach'd filth that floods the middle street, Is thy white blamelessness accounted blame ! "

But Vivien deeming Merlin overborne By instance, recommended, and let her tongue Rage like a fire among the noblest names, Polluting, and imputing her whole self, Defaming and defacing, till she left Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad clean.

Her words had issue other than she will'd. He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down, and made A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes,

And mutter'd in himself, " tell *her* the charm !  
 So, if she had it, would she rail on me  
 To snare the next, and if she have it not,  
 So will she rail. What did the wanton say ?  
 ' Not mount as high ; ' we scarce can sink as low :  
 For men at most differ as Heaven and earth,  
 But women, worst and best, as Heaven and Hell.  
 I know the Table Round, my friends of old ;  
 All brave, and many generous, and some chaste.  
 I think she cloaks the wounds of loss with lies ;  
 I do believe she tempted them and fail'd,  
 She is so bitter : for fine plots may fail,  
 Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as face  
 With colours of the heart that are not theirs.  
 I will not let her know : nine tithes of times  
 Face-flatterers and backbiters are the same.  
 And they, sweet soul, that most impute a crime  
 Are pronest to it, and impute themselves,  
 Wanting the mental range ; or low desire  
 Not to feel lowest makes them level all ;  
 Yea, they would pare the mountain to the plain,  
 To leave an equal baseness ; and in this  
 Are harlots like the crowd, that if they find  
 Some stain or blemish in a name of note,  
 Not grieving that their greatest are so small,  
 Inflate themselves with some insane delight,  
 And judge all nature from her feet of clay,

Without the will to lift their eyes, and see  
 Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual fire,  
 And touching other worlds. I am weary of her."

He spoke in words part heard, in whispers part,  
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell  
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat and chin.  
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat of his mood,  
 And hearing " harlot " mutter'd twice or thrice,  
 Leapt from her session on his lap, and stood  
 Stiff as a viper frozen ; loathsome sight,  
 How from the rosy lips of life and love,  
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of death !  
 White was her cheek ; sharp breaths of anger puff'd  
 Her fairy nostril out ; her hand half-clench'd  
 Went faltering sideways downward to her belt,  
 And feeling ; had she found a dagger there  
 (For in a wink the false love turns to hate)  
 She would have stabb'd him ; but she found it not :  
 His eye was calm, and suddenly she took  
 To bitter weeping like a beaten child,  
 A long, long weeping, not consolable.  
 Then her false voice made way broker with sobs.

" O crueler than was ever told in tale,  
 Or sung in song ! O vainly lavish'd love !  
 O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange,  
 Or seeming shameful, for what shame in love,  
 So love be true, and not as yours is—nothing

Poor Vivien had not done to win his trust  
 Who call'd her what he call'd her—all her crime,  
 All—all—the wish to prove him wholly hers."

She mused a little, and then clapt her hands  
 Together with a wailing shriek, and said :  
 " Stabb'd through the heart's affections to the heart !  
 Seeth'd like the kid in its own mother's milk !  
 Kill'd with a word worse than a life of blows !  
 I thought that he was gentle, being great :  
 O God, that I had loved a smaller man !  
 I should have found in him a greater heart.  
 O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw  
 The knights, the court, the king, dark in your light,  
 Who loved to make men darker than they are,  
 Because of that high pleasure which I had  
 To seat you sole upon my pedestal  
 Of worship—I am answer'd, and henceforth  
 The course of life that seem'd so flowery to me  
 With you for guide and master, only you,  
 Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken short,  
 And ending in a ruin—nothing left,  
 But into some low cave to crawl, and there,  
 If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,  
 Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness."

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung her head,  
 The snake of gold slid from her hair, the braid  
 Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,

And the dark wood grew darker toward the storm  
 In silence, while his anger slowly died  
 Within him, till he let his wisdom go  
 For ease of heart, and half believed her true :  
 Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,  
 " Come from the storm " and having no reply,  
 Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and the face  
 Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame ;  
 Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest touching terms  
 To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in vain.  
 At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,  
 And as the cageling newly flown returns,  
 The seeming-injured simple-hearted thing  
 Came to her old perch back, and settled there.  
 There while she sat, half-falling from his knees,  
 Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw  
 The slow tear creep from her closed eyelid yet,  
 About her, more in kindness than in love,  
 The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.  
 But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,  
 Her arms upon her breast across, and stood  
 A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,  
 Upright and flush'd before him : then she said :  
 " There must be now no passages of love  
 Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore.  
 Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,  
 What should be granted which your own gross heart  
 Would reckon worth the taking ? I will go.

In truth, but one thing now—better  
have died  
Thrice than have ask'd it once—  
could make me stay—  
That proof of trust—so often ask'd  
in vain !  
How justly, after that vile term of  
yours,  
I find with grief ! I might believe  
you then,  
Who knows ? once more. O, what was  
once to me  
Mere matter of the fancy, now has  
grown  
The vast necessity of heart and life.  
Farewell ; think kindly of me, for I  
fear  
My fate or fault, omitting gayer youth  
For one so old, must be to love you  
still.  
But ere I leave you let me swear once  
more  
That if I schemed against your peace  
in this,  
May you just heaven, that darkens  
o'er me, send  
One flash, that, missing all things  
else, may make  
My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie."

Scarce had she ceased, when out of  
heaven a bolt  
(For now the storm was close above  
them) struck,  
Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining  
With darted spikes and splinters of  
the wood  
The dark earth round. He raised his  
eyes and saw  
The tree that shone white-listed thro'  
the gloom.  
But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard  
her oath,  
And dazzled by the livid-flickering  
fork,  
And deafen'd with the stammering  
cracks and claps  
That follow'd, flying back and crying  
out,  
" O Merlin, tho' you do not love me,  
save,  
Yet save me ! " clung to him and  
hugg'd him close ;

And call'd him dear protector in her  
fright,  
Nor yet forgot her practice in her  
fright,  
But wrought upon his mood and  
hugg'd him close.  
The pale blood of the wizard at her  
touch  
Took gayer colours, like an opal  
warm'd,  
She blamed herself for telling hearsay  
tales :  
She shook from fear, and for her fault  
she wept  
Of petulancy ; she call'd him lord  
and liege,  
Her seer, her bard, her silver star of  
eve,  
Her God, her Merlin, the one pas-  
sionate love  
Of her whole life ; and ever over-  
head  
Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten  
branch  
Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain  
Above them ; and in change of glare  
and gloom  
Her eyes and neck glittering went  
and came ;  
Till now the storm, its burst of pas-  
sion spent,  
Moaning and calling out of other  
lands,  
Had left the ravaged woodland yet  
once more  
To peace ; and what should not have  
been had been,  
For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,  
Had yielded, told her all the charm,  
and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth  
the charm  
Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,  
And lost to life and use and name  
and fame.

Then crying " I have made his  
glory mine,"  
And shrieking out " O fool ! " the  
harlot leapt

Adown the forest, and the thicket closed  
Behind her, and the forest echo'd "fool."

Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,  
And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

## ELAINE

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable, Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat, High in her chamber up a tower to the east  
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot; Which first she placed where morn-ing's earliest ray  
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;  
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it  
A case of silk, and braided thereupon All the devices bazon'd on the shield  
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,  
A border fantasy of branch and flower,  
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.  
Nor rested thus content, but day by day  
Leaving her household and good father climb'd  
That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,  
Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,  
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,  
Now made a pretty history to herself  
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,  
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,  
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh;  
That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle;  
That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:  
And ah God's mercy what a stroke was there!  
And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God

How came the lily maid by that good shield  
Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name?  
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt  
For the great diamond in the dia-mond jousts,  
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name  
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur when none knew from whence he came,  
Long ere the people chose him for their king,  
Roving the trackless realms of Lyon-ncsse,  
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.  
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave  
Like its own mists to all the mountain side:  
For here two brothers, one a king, had met  
And fought together; but their names were lost.  
And each had slain his brother at a blow,  
And down they fell and made the glen abhor'd:  
And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,  
And lichen'd into colour with the crags:  
And he, that once was king, had on a crown  
Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.  
And Arthur came, and labouring up the pass  
All in a misty moonshine, unawares  
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull  
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown

Roll'd into light, and turning on its  
    rims  
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the  
    tarn :  
And down the shingly scaur he  
    plunged, and caught,  
And set it on his head, and in his  
    heart  
Heard murmurs "lo, thou likewise  
    shalt be king."

Thereafter, when a king, he had  
    the gems  
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd  
    them to his knights,  
Saying "these jewels, whereupon I  
    chanced  
Divinely, are the kingdom's not the  
    king's—  
For public use: henceforward let  
    there be,  
Once every year, a joust for one of  
    these :  
For so by nine years' proof we needs  
    must learn  
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves  
    shall grow  
In use of arms and manhood, till we  
    drive  
The Hcathen, who, some say, shall  
    rule the land  
Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus  
    he spoke :  
And eight years past, eight jousts had  
    been, and still  
Had Lancelot won the diamond of  
    the year,  
With purpose to present them to the  
    Queen,  
When all were won; but meaning all  
    at once  
To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
Worth half her realm, had never  
    spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and  
    the last  
And largest, Arthur, holding then his  
    court  
Hard on the river nigh the place  
    which now  
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim  
    a joust

At Camelot, and when the time drew  
    nigh  
Spake (for she had been sick) to  
    Guinevere  
"Are you so sick, my Queen, you  
    cannot move  
To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord,"  
    she said, "you know it."  
"Then will you miss," he answer'd,  
    "the great deeds  
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the  
    lists,  
A sight you love to look on." And  
    the Queen  
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt  
    languidly  
On Lancelot, where he stood beside  
    the King.  
He thinking that he read her meaning  
    there,  
"Stay with me, I am sick; my love  
    is more  
Than many diamonds," yielded, and  
    a heart,  
Love-loyal to the least wish of the  
    Queen  
(However much he yearn'd to make  
    complete  
The tale of diamonds for his destined  
    boon)  
Urged him to speak against the  
    truth, and say,  
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is  
    hardly whole,  
And lets me from the saddle;" and  
    the King  
Glanced first at him, then her, and  
    went his way.  
No sooner gone than suddenly she  
    began.  
  
"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,  
    much to blame.  
Why go you not to these fair jousts?  
    the knights  
Are half of them our enemies, and the  
    crowd  
Will murmur, lo the shameless ones,  
    who take  
Their pastime now the trustful king  
    is gone!"  
Then Lancelot vext at having lied in  
    vain;

“ Are you so wise ? you were not once so wise,  
My Queen, that summer, when you loved me first.  
Then of the crowd you took no more account  
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,  
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,  
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,  
Them surely can I silence with all ease.  
But now my loyal worship is allow'd Of all men : many a bard, without offence,  
Has link'd our names together in his lay,  
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,  
The pearl of beauty : and our knights at feast  
Have pledged us in this union, while the king  
Would listen smiling. How then ? is there more ?  
Has Arthur spoken aught ? or would yourself,  
Now weary of my service and devoir,  
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord ? ”

She broke into a little scornful laugh.  
“ Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,  
That passionate perfection, my good lord—  
But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven ?  
He never spake word of reproach to me,  
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,  
He cares not for me : only here to-day  
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his eyes :  
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him—else  
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,  
And swearing men to vows impossible,

To make them like himself : but, friend, to me  
He is all fault who hath no fault at all :  
For who loves me must have a touch of earth ;  
The low sun makes the colour : I am yours,  
Not Arthur's, as you know, save by the bond.  
And therefore hear my words : go to the jousts :  
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream  
When sweetest ; and the vermin voices here  
May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but they sting.”

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights.  
“ And with what face, after my pretext made,  
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot,  
I Before a king who honours his own word,  
As if it were his God's ? ”

“ Yea,” said the Queen,  
“ A moral child without the craft to rule,  
Else had he not lost me : but listen to me,  
If I must find you wit : we hear it said  
That men go down before your spear at a touch  
But knowing you are Lancelot ; your great name,  
This conquers : hide it therefore ; go unknown :  
Win I by this kiss you will : and our true king  
Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,  
As all for glory ; for to speak him true,  
You know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,  
No keener hunter after glory breathes.  
He loves it in his knights more than himself :

They prove to him his work : win and return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,  
Wrath at himself: not willing to be known,  
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,  
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,  
And there among the solitary downs,  
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way :  
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,  
That all in loops and links among the dales  
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.  
Thither he made and wound the gateway horn.  
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,  
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.  
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man ;  
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat  
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,  
Moving to meet him in the castle court ;  
And close behind them stept the lily maid  
Elaine, his daughter : mother of the house  
There was not : some light jest among them rose  
With laughter dying down as the great knight  
Approach'd them : then the Lord of Astolat.  
" Whence comest thou, my guest,  
and by what name  
Livist between the lips ? for by thy state  
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,  
After the king, who eat in Arthur's halls.  
Him have I seen : the rest, his Table Round,

Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights.  
" Known am I, and of Arthur's hall,  
and known,  
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.  
But since I go to joust as one unknown  
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,  
Hereafter you shall know me—and the shield—  
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat,  
" Here is Torre's :  
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.  
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.  
His you can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,  
" Yea since I cannot use it, you may have it."  
Here laugh'd the father saying " Fie,  
Sir Churl,  
Is that an answer for a noble knight ?  
Allow him : but Lavaine, my younger here,  
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,  
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour  
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,  
To make her thrice as wilful as before."

" Nay, father, nay good father,  
shame me not  
Before this noble knight " said young Lavaine  
" For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre :  
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go :  
A jest, no more : for, knight, the maiden dreamt  
That some one put this diamond in her hand,

And that it was too slippery to be held,  
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,  
The castle-well, belike; and then I said  
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it  
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)  
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.  
But father give me leave, an if he will,  
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:  
Win shall I not, but do my best to win:  
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So you will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,  
Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship  
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,  
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend;  
And you shall win this diamond—as I hear,  
It is a fair large diamond,—if you may,  
And yield it to this maiden, if you will."

"A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,  
"Such be for Queens and not for simple maids."

Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,  
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,  
Flush'd slightly at the slight dispragement  
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,  
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd.  
"If what is fair be but for what is fair,  
And only Queens are to be counted so,  
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,  
Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,  
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,  
Lifted her eycs, and read his lineaments.  
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,  
In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.  
Another sinnig on such heights with one,  
The flower of all the west and all the world,  
Had been the sleekor for it: but in him  
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose  
And drove him into wastes and solitudes  
For agony, who was yet a living soul.  
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man,  
That ever among ladies ate in Hall,  
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.  
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,  
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,  
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes  
And lovcd him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,  
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall  
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain  
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,  
But kindly man moving among his kind:  
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best  
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.

And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,  
And ever well and readily answer'd he ;  
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,  
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,  
Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,  
The heathen caught and left him of his tongue,  
" He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design  
Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd ;  
But I my sons and little daughter fled From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods  
By the great river in a boatman's hut.  
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke  
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

" O there, great Lord, doubtless,"  
Lavaine said, rapt  
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth  
Toward greatness in its elder, " you have fought.  
O tell us—for we live apart—you know  
Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke  
And answer'd him at full, as having been  
With Arthur in the fight which all day long  
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem ;  
And in the four wild battles by the shore  
Of Duglas ; that on Bassa ; then the war  
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts  
Of Celidon the forest ; and again  
By castle Gurnion where the glorious King  
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,  
Carved of one emerald, center'd in a sun

Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed ;  
And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,  
When the strong neighings of the wild white Horse  
Set every gilded parapet shuddering ;  
And up in Agned Cathregonion too,  
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,  
Where many a heathen fell ; " and on the mount  
Of Badon I myself beheld the King Charge at the head of all his Table Round,  
And all his legions crying Christ and him,  
And break them ; and I saw him, after, stand  
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume  
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,  
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried  
' They are broken, they are broken ' for the King,  
However mild he seems at home, nor cares  
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts—  
For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs  
Saying, his knights are better men than he—  
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God  
Fills him : I never saw his like : there lives  
No greater leader."

While he utter'd this,  
Low to her own heart said the lily maid  
" Save your great self, fair lord ; " and when he fell  
From talk of war to traits of pleasure—  
Being mirthful he but in a stately kind—  
She still took note that when the living smile  
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud

Of melancholy severe, from which again, Whenever in her hovering to and fro The lily maid had striven to make him cheer, There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness Of manners and of nature: and she thought That all was nature, all, perchance, for her. And all night long his face before her lived, As when a painter, poring on a face, Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man Behind it, and so paints him that his face, The shape and colour of a mind and life, Lives for his children, ever at its best And fullest; so the face before her lived, Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full Of noble things, and held her from her sleep. Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine. First as in fear, step after step, she stole Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating: Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court, " This shield, my friend, where is it? " and Lavaine Past inward, as she came from out the tower. There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd The glossy shoulder, humming to himself. Half-envyous of the flattering hand, she drew Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more amazed Than if seven men had set upon him, saw The maiden standing in the dewy light.	He had not dream'd she was so beautiful. Then came on him a sort of sacred fear, For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood Rapt on his face as if it were a God's. Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire, That he should wear her favour at the tilt. She braved a riotous heart in asking for it. " Fair lord, whose name I know not —noble it is, I well believe, the noblest—will you wear My favour at this tourney? " " Nay," said he, " Fair lady, since I never yet have worn Favour of any lady in the lists. Such is my wont, as those, who know me, know." " Yea, so," she answer'd; " then in wearing mine Needs must be lesser likelihood, neble lord, That those who know should know you." And he turn'd Her counsel up and down within his mind, And found it true, and answr'd, " true, my child. Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me: What is it? " and she told him " a red sleeve Broider'd with pearls," and brought it: then he bound Her token on his helmet, with a smile Saying, " I never yet have done so much For any maiden living," and the blood Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight; But left her all the paler, when Lavaine Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield, His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot, Who parted with his own to fair Elaine;
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" Do me this grace, my child, to have  
 my shield  
 In keeping till I come." " A grace  
 to me,"  
 She answer'd, " twice to-day. I am  
 your Squire."

Whereat Lavaine said, laughing,  
 " Lily maid,  
 For fear our people call you lily maid  
 In earnest, let me bring your colour  
 back ;  
 Once, twice, and thrice : now get you  
 hence to bed : "  
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his  
 own hand,  
 And thus they moved away : she  
 stay'd a minute,  
 Then made a sudden step to the gate,  
 and there—  
 Her bright hair blown about the  
 serious face  
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's  
 kiss—  
 Paused in the gateway, standing by  
 the shield  
 In silence, while she watch'd their  
 arms far-off  
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the  
 downs.  
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and  
 took the shield,  
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions  
 past away  
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless  
 downs,  
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there  
 lived a knight  
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty  
 years  
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd  
 and pray'd  
 And ever labouring had scoop'd him-  
 self  
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall  
 On massive columns, like a shorecliff  
 cave,  
 And cells and chambers : all were  
 fair and dry ;  
 The green light from the meadows  
 underneath  
 Struck up and lived along the milky  
 roofs ;

And in the meadows tremulous aspen-  
 trees  
 And poplars made a noise of falling  
 showers,  
 And thither wending there that night  
 they bode.

But when the next day broke from  
 underground,  
 And shot red fire and shadows thro'  
 the cave,  
 They rose, heard mass, broke fast,  
 and rode away :  
 Then Lancelot saying, " hear, but  
 hold my name  
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of  
 the Lake,"  
 Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant  
 reverence,  
 Dearer to true hearts than their own  
 praise,  
 But left him leave to stammer, " is  
 it indeed ? "  
 And after muttering " the great  
 Lancelot "  
 At last he got his breath and answer'd  
 " One,  
 One have I seen—that other, our  
 liege lord,  
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's  
 king of kings,  
 Of whom the people talk mysteri-  
 ously,  
 He will be there—then were I stricken  
 blind  
 That minute, I might say that I had  
 seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they  
 reach'd the lists  
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his  
 eyes  
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which  
 half round  
 Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the  
 grass,  
 Until they found the clear-faced King,  
 who sat  
 Robed in red samite, easily to be  
 known,  
 Since to his crown the golden dragon  
 clung,  
 And down his robe the dragon writhed  
 in gold,

And from the carven-work behind him  
cropt  
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to  
make  
Arms for his chair, while all the rest  
of them  
Thro' knots and loops and folds  
innumerable  
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they  
found  
The new design wherein they lost  
themselves,  
Yet with all ease, so tender was the  
work :  
And, in the costly canopy o'er him  
set,  
Blazed the last diamond of the name-  
less king.  
Then Lancelot answer'd young La-  
vaine and said,  
" Me you call great : mine is the  
firmer seat,  
The truer lance : but there is many a  
youth  
Now crescent, who will come to all I  
am  
And overcome it ; and in me there  
dwells  
No greatness, save it be some far-off  
touch  
Of greatness to know well I am not  
great :  
There is the man." And Lavaine  
gaped upon him.  
As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
The trumpets blew ; and then did  
either side,  
They that assail'd, and they that  
held the lists,  
Set lance in rest, strike spur, sud-  
denly move,  
Meet in the midst, and there so fur-  
iously  
Shock, that a man far-off might well  
perceive,  
If any man that day were left afield,  
The hard earth shake, and a low  
thunder of arms.  
And Lancelot bode a little, till he  
saw  
Which were the weaker ; then he  
hurl'd into it  
Against the stronger : little need to  
speak

Of Lancelot in his glory : King, duke,  
earl,  
Count, baron—whom he smote, he  
overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's  
kith and kin,  
Ranged with the Table Round that  
held the lists,  
Strong men, and wrathful that a  
stranger knight  
Should do and almost overdo the  
deeds  
Of Lancelot ; and one said to the  
other " Lo !  
What is he ? I do not mean the  
force alone,  
The grace and versatility of the man—  
Is it not Lancelot ! " " When has  
Lancelot worn  
Favour of any lady in the lists ?  
Not such his wont, as we, that know  
him, know."  
" How then ? who then ? " a fury  
seized on them,  
A fiery family passion for the name  
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with  
theirs.  
They couch'd their spears and prick'd  
their steeds and thus,  
Their plumes driv'n backward by the  
wind they made  
In moving, all together down upon  
him  
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide  
North-sea,  
Green-glimmering toward the sum-  
mit, bears, with all  
Its stormy crests that smoke against  
the skies,  
Down on a bark, and overbears the  
bark,  
And him that helms it, so they over-  
bore  
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a  
spear  
Down-glancing lamed the charger,  
and a spear  
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and  
the head  
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt,  
and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully ;  
 He bore a knight of old répute to the earth,  
 And brought his horse to Lancelot  
 where he lay.  
 He up the side, sweating with agony,  
 got,  
 But thought to do while he might yet endure,  
 And being lustily holpen by the rest,  
 His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle  
 To those he fought with—drew his kith and kin  
 And all the Table Round that held the lists,  
 Back to the barrier ; then the heralds blew  
 Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve  
 Of scarlet, and the pearls ; and all the knights,  
 His party, cried " Advance, and take your prize  
 The diamond ; " but he answer'd,  
 " diamond me  
 No diamonds ! for God's love, a little air !  
 Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death !  
 Hence will I and I charge you, follow me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field  
 With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.  
 There from his charger down he slid, and sat,  
 Gasping to Sir Lavaine, " draw the lance-head : "  
 " Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,  
 " I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."  
 But he " I die already with it : draw—  
 Draw,"—and Lavaine drew, and that other gave  
 A marvellous great shriek and ghestly groan,  
 And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank

For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.  
 Then came the hermit out and bare him in,  
 There stanch'd his wound ; and there, in daily doubt  
 Whether to live or die, for many a week  
 Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove  
 Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,  
 And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,  
 His party, knights of utmost North and West,  
 Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,  
 Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him  
 " Lo, Sire, our knight thro' whom we won the day  
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize  
 Untaken, crying that his prize is death."  
 " Heaven hinder," said the King  
 " that such an one,  
 So great a knight as we have seen to-day—  
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot—  
 Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—  
 He must not pass uncared for. Gawayne, rise,  
 My nephew, and ride forth and find the knight.  
 Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.  
 I charge you that you get at once to horse.  
 And knights and kings, there breathes not one of you  
 Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given :  
 His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him  
 No customary honour : since the knight  
 Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,

Ourselves will send it after. Wherefore take  
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,  
And bring us what he is and how he fares,  
And cease not from your quest, until you find."

So saying from the carven flower above,  
To which it made a restless heart, he took,  
And gave, the diamond : then from where he sat  
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,  
With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince  
In the mid might and flourish of his May,  
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,  
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint  
And Lamorack, a good knight, but therewithal  
Sir Modred's brother, of a crafty house,  
Nor often loyal to his word, and now  
Wroth that the king's command to sally forth  
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave  
The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went ;  
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,  
Past, thinking " is it Lancelot who has come  
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain  
Of glory, and has added wound to wound,  
And ridd'n away to die ? " So fear'd the King,  
And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.  
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,

" Love, are you yet so sick ? " " Nay, Lord," she said.  
" And where is Lancelot ? " Then the Queen amazed  
" Was he not with you ? won he not your prize ? "  
" Nay, but one like him." " Why that like was he."  
And when the King demanded how she knew,  
Said " Lord, no sooner had you parted from us,  
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk  
That men went down before his spear at a touch,  
But knowing he was Lancelot ; his great name  
Conquer'd ; and therefore would he hide his name  
From all men, ev'n the king, and to this end  
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,  
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn  
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd :  
And added, ' our true Arthur, when he learns,  
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain  
Of purer glory.' "

Then replied the King :  
" Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,  
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
To have trusted me as he has trusted you.  
Surely his king and most familiar friend  
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,  
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,  
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
Must needs have moved my laughter : now remains  
But little cause for laughter : his own kin—  
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, these !  
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him ;

<p>So that he went sore wounded from the field : Yet good news too : for goodly hopes are mine That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart. He wore, against his wont, upon his helm A sleeve of scarlet, broidered with great pearls, Some gentle maiden's gift."</p> <p>" Yea, lord," she said, " Your hopes are mine," and saying that she choked, And sharply turn'd about to hide her face, Moved to her chamber, and there flung herself Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it, And clenched her fingers till they bit the palm, And shriek'd out " traitor " to the unhearing wall, Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again, And moved about her palace, proud and pale.</p> <p>Gawain the while thro' all the region round Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest, Touch'd at all points, except the poplar grove, And came at last, tho' late, to Asto- lat: Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid Glanced at, and cried " What news from Camelot, lord ? What of the knight with the red sleeve ? " " He won." " I knew it," she said. " But parted from the jousts Hurt in the side," whereat she caught her breath; Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go ; Thereon she smote her hand : well- nigh she swoon'd : And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came</p>	<p>The lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince Reported who he was, and on what quest Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find The victor, but had ridden wildly round To seek him, and was wearied of the search. To whom the lord of Astolat " Bide with us, And ride no longer wildly, noble Prince ! Here was the knight, and here he left a shield ; This will he send or come for : further- more Our son is with him ; we shall hear anon, Needs must we hear." To this the courteous Prince Accorded with his wonted courtesy, Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it, And stay'd ; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine : Where could be found face daintier ? then her shape From forehead down to foot perfect —again From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd : " Well—if I bide, lo ! this wild flower for me ! " And oft they met among the garden yews, And there he set himself to play upon her With sallying wit, free flashes from a height Above her, graces of the court, and songs, Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence And amorous adulation, till the maid Rebell'd against it, saying to him, " Prince, O loyal nephew of our noble King, Why ask you not to see the shield he left, Whence you might learn his name ? Why slight your King, And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove</p>
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No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
Who lost the hern we slipt him at,  
and went  
To all the winds ? " " Nay, by mine  
head," said he,  
" I lose it, as we lose the lark in  
heaven,  
O damsel, in the light of your blue  
eyes :  
But an you will it let me see the  
shield."  
And when the shield was brought,  
and Gawain saw  
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd  
with gold,  
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh,  
and mock'd :  
" Right was the King ! our Lancelot !  
that true man ! "  
" And right was I," she answer'd  
merrily, " I,  
Who dream'd my knight the greatest  
knight of all."  
" And if I dream'd," said Gawain,  
" that you love  
This greatest knight, your pardon !  
lo, you know it !  
Speak therefore : shall I waste myself  
in vain ? "  
Full simple was her answer " What  
know I ?  
My brethren have been all my fellow-  
ship,  
And I, when often they have talk'd  
of love,  
Wish'd it had been my mother, for  
they talk'd,  
Meseem'd, of what they knew not ;  
so myself—  
I know not if I know what true love  
is,  
But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
Methinks there is none other I can  
love."  
" Yea, by God's death," said he,  
" you love him well,  
But would not, knew you what all  
others know,  
And whom he loves." " So be it,"  
cried Elaine,  
And lifted her fair face and moved  
away :  
But he pursued her calling " Stay a  
little !

One golden minute's grace : he wore  
your sleeve :  
Would he break faith with one I may  
not name ?  
Must our true man change like a leaf  
at last ?  
Nay—like enough : why then, far be  
it from me  
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his  
loves !  
And, damsel, for I deem you know full  
well  
Where your great knight is hidden,  
let me leave  
My quest with you ; the diamond  
also : here !  
For if you love, it will be sweet to  
give it ;  
And if he love, it will be sweet to have  
it  
From your own hand ; and whether  
he love or not,  
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you  
well  
A thousand times !—a thousand  
times farewell !  
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we  
two  
May meet at court hereafter : there,  
I think,  
So you will learn the courtesies of the  
court,  
We two shall know each other."  
Then he gave,  
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which  
he gave,  
The diamond, and all wearied of the  
quest  
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he  
went  
A true-love ballad, lightly rode  
away.

Thence to the court he past ; there  
told the King  
What the King knew " Sir Lancelot  
is the knight."  
And added " Sire, my liege, so much  
I learnt ;  
But fail'd to find him tho' I rode all  
round  
The region : but I lighted on the  
maid,

Whose sleeve he wore ; she loves him ; and to her, Deeming our courtesy is the truest law, I gave the diamond : she will render it ; For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied, " Too courteous truly ! you shall go no more On quest of mine, seeing that you forget Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth but all in awe, For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word, Linger'd that other, staring after him ; Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad About the maid of Astolat, and her love. All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed : " The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot, Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat." Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all Had marvel what the maid might be, but most Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news. She, that had heard the noise of it before, But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low, Marr'd her friend's point with pale tranquillity. So ran the tale like fire about the court, Fire in dry stubble a nine days' wonder flared : Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice

Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen, And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid Smilcd at each other, while the Queen who sat With lips severely placid felt the knot Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor Bencath the banquet, where the meats became As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat, Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart, Crept to her father, while he mused alone, Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said, " Father, you call me wilful, and the fault Is yours who let me have my will, and now, Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits ? " " Nay," said he, " surely." " Wherefore, let me hence," She answer'd, " and find out our dear Lavaine." " You will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine : Bide," answer'd he : " we needs must hear anon Of him, and of that other." " Ay," she said, " And of that other, for I needs must hence And find that other, wheresoe'er he be, And with mine own hand give his diamond to him, Lest I be found as faithless in the quest As you proud Prince who left the quest to me. Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,

Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.  
 The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,  
 My father, to be sweet and serviceable  
 To noble knights in sickness, as you know,  
 When these have worn their tokens : let me hence  
 I pray you." Then her father nodding said,  
 " Ay, ay, the diamond : wit you well,  
 my child,  
 Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,  
 Being our greatest : yea, and you must give it—  
 And sure I think this fruit is hung too high  
 For any mouth to gape for save a Queen's—  
 Nay, I mean nothing : so then, get you gone,  
 Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,  
 And while she made her ready for her ride,  
 Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,  
 " Being so very wilful you must go,"  
 And changed itself and echoed in her heart,  
 " Being so very wilful you must die." But she was happy enough and shook it off,  
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us ;  
 And in her heart she answer'd it and said,  
 " What matter, so I help him back to life ?"  
 Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide  
 Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs  
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates  
 Came on her brother with a happy face  
 Making a roan horse caper and curvet  
 For pleasure all about a field of flowers :

Whom when she saw, " Lavaine," she cried, " Lavaine,  
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot ?" He amazed,  
 " Torre and Elaine ! why here ? Sir Lancelot !  
 How know you my lord's name is Lancelot ?"  
 But when the maid had told him all her tale,  
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods  
 Left them, and under the strange-statured gate,  
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,  
 Past up the still rich city to his kin,  
 His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot ;  
 And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove  
 Led to the caves : there first she saw the casque  
 Of Lancelot on the wall : her scarlet sleeve,  
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,  
 Stream'd from it still ; and in her heart she laugh'd,  
 Because he had not loosed it from his helm,  
 But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.  
 And when they gain'd the cell in which he slept,  
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands  
 Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream  
 Of dragging down his enemy made them move.  
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Uttered a little tender dolorous cry.  
 The sound not wonted in a place still  
 Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes  
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying  
 " Your prize the diamond sent you by the King : "

His eyes glisten'd : she fancied " is it for me ? "

And when the maid had told him all the tale

Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest

Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt

Full lowly by the corners of his bed,

And laid the diamond in his open hand.

Her face was near, and as we kiss the child

That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.

At once she slipt like water to the floor.

" Alas," he said, " your ride has wearied you.

Rest must you have." " No rest for me," she said ;

" Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."

What might she mean by that ? his large black eyes,

Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,

Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself

In the heart's colours on her simple face ;

And Lancelot look'd and was perplext in mind.

And being weak in body said no more ;

But did not love the colour ; woman's love,

Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd

Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,

And past beneath the wildly-sculptured gates

Far up the dim rich city to her kin ;

There bode the night : but woke with dawn, and past

Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,

Thence to the cave : so day by day she past

In either twilight ghost-like to and fro

Gliding, and every day she tended him, And likewise many a night : and Lancelot

Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt

Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times

Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem

Uncourteous, even he : but the meek maid

Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,

Milder than any mother to a sick child,

And never woman yet, since man's first fall,

Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love

Uppore her ; till the hermit, skill'd in all

The simples and the science of that time,

Told him that her fine care had saved his life.

And the sick man forgot her simple blush,

Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,

Would listen for her coming and regret

Her parting step, and held her tenderly,

And loved her with all love except the love

Of man and woman when they love their best

Closest and sweetest, and had died the death

In any knightly fashion for her sake.

And peradventure had he seen her first

She might have made this and that other world

Another world for the sick man ; but now

The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,

His honour rooted in dishonour stood,

And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made  
 Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.  
 These, as but born of sickness, could not live :  
 For when the blood ran lustier in him again,  
 Full often the sweet image of one face, Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,  
 Dispersed his resolution like a cloud. Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace  
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,  
 Or short and coldly, and she knew right well  
 What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant  
 She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,  
 And drove her ere her time across the fields  
 Far into the rich city, where alone She murmur'd "vain, in vain : it cannot be.  
 He will not love me : how then ? must I die ?"  
 Then as a little helpless innocent bird, That has but one plain passage of few notes,  
 Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er  
 For all an April morning, till the ear Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid Went half the night repeating, "must I die ?"  
 And now to right she turn'd, and now to left, And found no case in turning or in rest ;  
 And "him or death" she mutter'd, "death or him," Again and like a burthen, "him or death."  
 But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole, To Astolat returning rode the three. There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,

She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought  
 " If I be loved, these are my festal robes,  
 If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."  
 And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid That she should ask some goodly gift of him  
 For her own self or hers ; " and do not shun To speak the wish most near to your true heart ;  
 Such service have you done me, that I make  
 My will of yours, and Prince and Lord am I  
 In mine own land, and what I will I can."  
 Then like a ghost she lifted up her face, But like a ghost without the power to speak.  
 And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,  
 And bode among them yet a little space  
 Till he should learn it ; and one morn it chanced  
 He found her in among the garden yews,  
 And said, "Delay no longer, speak your wish,  
 Seeing I must go to-day : " then out she brake ;  
 " Going ? and we shall never see you more.  
 And I must die for want of one bold word."  
 " Speak : that I live to hear," he said, "is yours."  
 Then suddenly and passionately she spoke :  
 " I have gone mad. I love you : let me die."  
 " Ah, sister," answer'd Lancelot, "what is this ?"  
 And innocently extending her white arms,  
 " Your love," she said, "your love — to be your wife."  
 And Lancelot answer'd, "Had I chos'n to wed,  
 I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine :

But now there never will be wife of mine."

"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be wife,  
But to be with you still, to see your face,  
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world."

And Lancelot answer'd, "Nay, the world, the world,  
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart  
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue  
To blare its own interpretation—nay,  
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,  
And your good father's kindness."

And she said "Not to be with you, not to see your face—  
Alas for me then, my good days are done."

"Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten times nay!  
This is not love: but love's first flash in youth,  
Most common: yea I know it of mine own self:  
And you yourself will smile at your own self  
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life  
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age:  
And then will I, for true you are and sweet  
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,  
More specially should your good knight be poor,  
Endow you with broad land and territory  
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,  
So that would make you happy: furthermore,  
Ev'n to the death, as tho' you were my blood,  
In all your quatrels will I be your knight.  
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,  
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke  
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale  
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied;  
"Of all this will I nothing;" and so fell,  
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew  
Their talk had pierced, her father.  
"Ay, a flash,  
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.  
Too courteous are you, fair Lord Lancelot.  
I pray you, use some rough courtesy  
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,  
'That were against me: what I can I will;  
And there that day remain'd, and toward even  
Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,  
Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield;  
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,  
Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd  
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.  
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;  
And she by tact of love was well aware  
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him,  
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,  
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.  
This was the one courtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:  
His very shield was gone; only the case,

Her own poor work, her empty labour, left.  
 But still she heard him, still his picture form'd  
 And grew between her and the pictured wall.  
 Then came her father, saying in low tones  
 " Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.  
 Then came her brethren saying,  
 " Peace to thee  
 Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with all calm.  
 But when they left her to herself again,  
 Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field  
 Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the owls  
 Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt  
 Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms  
 Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,  
 And call'd her song " The Song of Love and Death,"  
 And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.

" Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;  
 And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:  
 I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

" Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:  
 Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.  
 O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

" Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,  
 Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,  
 I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

" I fain would follow love, if that could be;  
 I needs must follow death, who calls for me;  
 Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,  
 All in a fiery dawning wild with wind  
 That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought  
 With shuddering " Hark the Phantom of the house  
 That ever shrieks before a death," and call'd  
 The father, and all three in hurry and fear  
 Ran to her, and lo! the bloodred light of dawn  
 Flared on her face, she shrilling " Let me die!"

As when we dwell upon a word we know  
 Repeating, till the word we know so well  
 Becomes a wonder and we know not why,  
 So dwelt the father on her face and thought  
 " Is this Elaine? " till back the maiden fell,  
 Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,  
 Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.  
 At last she said " Sweet brothers, yesternight  
 I seem'd a curious little maid again,  
 As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,  
 And when you used to take me with the flood  
 Up the great river in the boatman's boat.  
 Only you would not pass beyond the cape  
 That has the poplar on it: there you fixt  
 Your limit, oft returning with the tide,  
 And yet I cried because you would not pass.

Beyond it, and far up the shining flood	For this discomfort he hath done the house."
Until we found the palace of the king. And yet you would not; but this night I dream'd	To which the gentle sister made reply,
That I was all alone upon the flood, And then I said 'Now shall I have my will: '	" Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth, Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.	fault Not to love me, than it is mine to love
So let me hence that I may pass at last	Him of all men who seems to me the highest."
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,	" Highest? " the Father answer'd, echoing " highest? "
Until I find the palace of the king. There will I enter in among them all, And no man there will dare to mock at me;	(He meant to break the passion in her) " nay,
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,	Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;	But this I know, for all the people know it,
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,	He loves the Queen, and in an open shame;
Lancelot, who coldly went nor bade me one:	And she returns his love in open shame,
And there the King will know me and my love,	If this be high, what is it to be low? "
And there the Queen herself will pity me,	Then spake the lily maid of Astolat;
And all the gentle court will welcome me,	" Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
And after my long voyage I shall rest! "	For anger: these are slanders: never yet
" Peace," said her father, " O my child, you seem light-headed, for what force is yours to go So far, being sick? and wherefore would you look On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all? "	Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
Then the rough Torre began to heave and move, And bluster into stormy sobs and say " I never loved him: an I meet with him, I care not howsoever great he be, Then will I strike at him and strike him down, Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,	He makes no friend who never made a foe.
	But now it is my glory to have loved One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,
	My father, howsoe'er I seem to you, Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
	And greatest, tho' my love had no return:
	Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
	Thanks, but you work against your own desire;
	For if I could believe the things you say
	I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,

Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man  
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,  
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,  
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised  
A letter, word for word ; and when he ask'd  
" Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord ?  
Then will I bear it gladly ; " she replied,  
" For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,  
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote  
The letter she devised ; which being writ  
And folded, " O sweet father, tender and true,  
Deny me not," she said—" you never yet  
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,  
My latest : lay the letter in my hand  
A little ere I die, and close the hand  
Upon it ; I shall guard it even in death.  
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,  
Then take the little bed on which I died  
For Lancloot's love, and deck it like the Queen's  
For richness, and me also like the Queen  
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.  
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier  
To take me to the river, and a barge  
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.  
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.  
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,  
And none of you can speak for me so well.  
And therefore let our dumb old man alone

Go with me, he can steer and row,  
and he Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased : her father promised ; whereupon She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.  
But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh Her father laid the letter in her hand, And closed the hand upon it, and she died.  
So that day there was dole in Astolat.  
But when the next sun brake from underground,  
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge, Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.  
There sat the lifelong creature of the house, Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck, Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.  
So those two brethren from the chariot took And on the black decks laid her in her bed, Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung The silken case with braided blazonings, And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her " Sister, farewell for ever," and again " Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.  
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the flood— In her right hand the lily, in her left The letter—all her bright hair streaming down— And all the coverlid was cloth of gold

Drawn to her waist, and she herself  
in white  
All but her face, and that clear-fa-  
tured face  
Was lovely, for she did not seem as  
dead  
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she  
smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace  
craved  
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
The price of half a realm, his costly  
gift,  
Hard-won and hardly won with  
bruise and blow,  
With deaths of others, and almost his  
own,  
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds :  
for he saw  
One of her house, and sent him to the  
Queen  
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen  
agreed  
With such and so unmoved a majesty  
She might have seem'd her statue,  
but that he,  
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd  
her feet  
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong  
eye  
The shadow of a piece of pointed lace,  
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the  
walls,  
And parted, laughing in his courtly  
heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,  
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward  
the stream,  
They met, and Lancelot kneeling  
utter'd, "Queen,  
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my  
joy,  
Take, what I had not won except for  
you,  
These jewels, and make me happy,  
making them  
An armlet for the roundest arm on  
earth,  
Or necklace for a neck to which the  
swan's  
Is tawnier than her cygnet's : these  
are words :

Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin  
In speaking, yet O grant my worship  
of it  
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such  
sin in words  
Perchance, we both can pardon : but,  
my Queen,  
I hear of rumours flying thro' your  
court.  
Our bond, as not the bond of man and  
wife,  
Should have in it an absoluter trust  
To make up that defect : let rumours  
be :  
When did not rumours fly ? these, as  
I trust  
That you trust me in your own noble-  
ness,  
I may not well believe that you be-  
lieve."

While thus he spoke, half-turn'd  
away, the Queen  
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering  
vine  
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast  
them off,  
Till all the place whereon she stood  
was green ;  
Then, when he ceased, in one cold  
passive hand  
Received at once and laid aside the  
gems  
There on a table near her, and re-  
plied.

" It may be, I am quicker of belief  
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the  
Lake.  
Our bond is not the bond of man and  
wife.  
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,  
It can be broken easier. I for you  
This many a year have done despite  
and wrong  
To one whom ever in my heart of  
hearts  
I did acknowledge nobler. What are  
these ?  
Diamonds for me ! they had been  
thrice their worth  
Being your gift, had you not lost your  
own.

To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver's. Not for  
me !  
For her ! for your new fancy. Only  
this  
Grant me, I pray you : have your  
joys apart.  
I doubt not that however changed,  
you keep  
So much of what is graceful : and  
myself  
Would shun to break those bounds of  
courtesy  
In which as Arthur's queen I move  
and rule :  
So cannot speak my mind. An end  
to this !  
A strange one ! yet I take it with  
Amen.  
So pray you, add my diamonds to her  
pearls ;  
Deck her with these ; tell her, she  
shines me down :  
An armlet for an arm to which the  
Queen's  
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck  
O as much fairer—as a faith once fair  
Was richer than these diamonds—  
hers not mine—  
Nay, by the mother of our Lord him-  
self;  
Or hers or mine, mine now to work  
my will—  
She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,  
And, thro' the casement standing  
wide for heat,  
Flung them, and down they flash'd,  
and smote the stream.  
Then from the smitten surface flash'd,  
as it were,  
Diamonds to meet them, and they  
past away.  
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half  
disgust  
At love, life, all things on the win-  
dow ledge,  
Close underneath his eyes, and right  
across  
Where these had fallen, slowly past  
the barge  
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest  
night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not,  
burst away  
To weep and wail in secret ; and the  
barge,  
On to the palace-doorway sliding,  
paused.  
There two stood arm'd, and kept the  
door ; to whom,  
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,  
Were added mouths that gaped, and  
eyes that ask'd  
"What is it ?" but that oarsman's  
haggard face,  
As hard and still as is the face that  
men  
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken  
rocks  
On some cliff-side, appall'd them,  
and they said,  
"He is enchanted, cannot speak—  
and she,  
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy  
Queen, so fair !  
Yea, but how pale ! what are they ?  
flesh and blood ?  
Or come to take the King to fairy  
land ?  
For some do hold our Arthur cannot  
die,  
But that he passes into fairy land."

While thus they babbled of the King,  
the King  
Came girt with knights : then turn'd  
the tongueless man  
From the half-face to the full eye, and  
rose  
And pointed to the damsel, and the  
doors.  
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale  
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the  
maid ;  
And reverently they bore her into  
hall.  
Then came the fine Gawain and  
wonder'd at her,  
And Lancelot later came and mused  
at her,  
And last the Queen herself and pitied  
her,  
But Arthur spied the letter in her  
hand,  
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it ;  
this was all.

" Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,  
 I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,  
 Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
 Hither, to take my last farewell of you,  
 I loved you, and my love had no return,  
 And therefore my true love has been my death,  
 And therefore to our lady Guinevere,  
 And to all other ladies, I make moan.  
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
 As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read,  
 And ever in the reading, lords and dames  
 Wept, looking often from his face  
 who read  
 To hers which lay so silent, and at times,  
 So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips,  
 Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all ;  
 " My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,  
 Know that for this most gentle maiden's death  
 Right heavy am I ; for good she was and true,  
 But loved me with a love beyond all love  
 In women, whomssoever I have known,  
 Yet to be loved makes not to love again ;  
 Not at my years, however it hold in youth.  
 I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave  
 No cause, not willingly, for such a love :  
 To this I call my friends in testimony,  
 Her brethren, and her father, who himself

Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,  
 To break her passion, some discourtesy  
 Against my nature : what I could, I did.

I left her and I bade her no farewell.  
 Tho', had I dreamt the damscl would have died,  
 I might have put my wits to some rough use,  
 And help'd her from herself."

Then said the Queen  
 (Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)

" You might at least have done her so much grace,  
 Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death."  
 He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,  
 He adding,

" Queen, she would not be content  
 Save that I wedded her, which could not be.

Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd :  
 It could not be. I told her that her love

Was but the flash of youth, would darken down

To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
 Toward one more worthy of her— then would I,

More specially were he, she wedded, poor,  
 Estate them with large land and territory

In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,

To keep them in all joyance : more than this

I could not ; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, " O my knight,  
 It will be to your worship, as my knight,  
 And mine, as head of all our Table Round,  
 To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then  
in all the realm  
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly  
went  
The marshall'd order of their Table  
Round,  
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont,  
to see  
The maiden buried, not as one un-  
known,  
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous  
obsequies,  
And mass, and rolling music, like a  
Queen.  
And when the knights had laid her  
comely head  
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,  
Then Arthur spake among them,  
" Let her tomb  
Be costly, and her image thereupon.  
And let the shield of Lancelot at her  
feet  
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.  
And let the story of her dolorous  
voyage  
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her  
tomb  
In letters gold and azure ! " which  
was wrought  
Thereafter ; but when now the lords  
and dames  
And people, from the high door  
streaming, brake  
Disorderly, as homeward each, the  
Queen,  
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he  
moved apart,  
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing  
" Lancelot,  
Forgive me ; mine was jealousy in  
love."  
He answer'd with his eyes upon the  
ground,  
" That is love's curse ; pass on, my  
Queen, forgiven."  
But Arthur who beheld his cloudy  
brows  
Approach'd him, and with full affec-  
tion flung  
One arm about his neck, and spake  
and said.  
" Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in  
whom I have

Most love and most affiance, for I  
know  
What thou hast been in battle by my  
side,  
And many a time have watch'd thee  
at the tilt  
Strike down the lusty and long-  
practised knight,  
And let the younger and unskill'd go  
by  
To win his honour and to make his  
name,  
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a  
man  
Made to be loved ; but now I would  
to God,  
For the wild people say wild things of  
thee,  
Thou couldst have loved this maiden,  
shaped, it seems,  
By God for thee alone, and from her  
face,  
If one may judge the living by the  
dead,  
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,  
Who might have brought thee, now a  
lonely man  
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue,  
sons  
Born to the glory of thy name and  
fame,  
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of  
the Lake."

Then answer'd Lancelot, " Fair she  
was, my King,  
Pure, as you ever wish your knights  
to be,  
To doubt her fairness were to want an  
eye,  
To doubt her pureness were to want a  
heart—  
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy  
love  
Could bind him, but free love will not  
be bound."

" Free love, so bound, were freèst,"  
said the King.  
" Let love be free ; free love is for  
the best :  
And, after heaven, on our dull side of  
death,

<p>What should be best, if not so pure a love Clothed in so pure a loveliness ? yet thee She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think, Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."</p>	<p>Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be ! For what am I ? what profits me my name Of greatest knight ? I fought for it, and have it : Pleasure to have it, none ; to lose it, pain ; Now grown a part of me : but what use in it ?</p>
<p>And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went, And at the inrunning of a little brook Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes And saw the barge that brought her moving down, Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said Low in himself " Ah simple heart and sweet, You loved me, damsel, surely with a love Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul ? Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last— Farewell, fair lily. ' Jealousy in love ? Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride ? Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love, May not your crescent fear for name and fame Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes ? Why did the King dwell on my name to me ?</p>	<p>To make men worse by making my sin known ? Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great ? Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man Not after Arthur's heart ! I needs must break These bonds that so defame me : not without She wills it : would I, if she will'd it ? nay, Who knows ? but if I would not, then may God, I pray him, send a sudden Angel down To seize me by the hair and bear me far, And fling me deep in that forgotten mere, Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."</p>
<p>Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach, Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake Stole from his mother—as the story runs— She chanted snatches of mysterious song Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn She kiss'd me saying thou art fair, my child, As a king's son, and often in her arms She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.</p>	<p>So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorse- ful pain, Not knowing he should die a holy man.</p>

### GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court,  
and sat  
There in the holy house at Almesbury  
Weeping, none with her save a little  
maid,  
A novice : one low light betwixt  
them burn'd  
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all  
abroad,  
Beneath moon unseen albeit at full,  
The white mist, like a face-cloth to  
the face,  
Clung to the dead earth, and the land  
was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause  
of fight  
Sir Modred ; he the nearest to the  
King,  
His nephew, ever like a subtle beast  
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the  
throne,  
Ready to spring, waiting a chance :  
for this,  
He chill'd the popular praises of the  
King  
With silent smiles of slow disparage-  
ment ;  
And tamper'd with the Lords of the  
White Horse,  
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left ;  
and sought  
To make disruption in the Table  
Round  
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into  
feuds  
Serving his traitorous end ; and all  
his aims  
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for  
Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when  
all the court,  
Green-suited, but with plumes that  
mock'd the may,  
Had been, their wont, a-maying and  
return'd,  
That Modred still in green, all ear and  
eye,  
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-  
wall  
To spy some secret scandal if he might,  
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt  
her best  
Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her  
court.  
The wiliest and the worst ; and more  
than this  
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing  
by  
Spied where he couch'd, and as the  
gardener's hand  
Picks from the colewort a green  
caterpillar,  
So from the high wall and the flower-  
ing grove  
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by  
the heel,

And cast him as a worm upon the way ;  
But when he knew the Prince tho'  
marr'd with dust,  
He, reverencing king's blood in a bad  
man,  
Made such excuses as he might, and  
these  
Full knightly without scorn ; for in  
those days  
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt  
in scorn :  
But, if a man were halt or hunch'd,  
in him  
By those whom God had made full-  
limb'd and tall,  
Scorn was allow'd as part of his de-  
fect,  
And he was answer'd softly by the  
King  
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot  
holp  
To raise the Prince, who rising twice  
or thrice  
Full sharply smote his knees, and  
smiled, and went :  
But, ever after, the small violence  
done  
Ranked in him and ruffed all his  
heart,  
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day  
long  
A little bitter pool about a stone  
On the bare coast.  
But when Sir Lancelot told  
This matter to the Queen, at first she  
laugh'd  
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty  
fall,  
Then shudder'd, as the village wife  
who cries  
" I shudder, some one steps across my  
grave ; "  
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for  
indeed  
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle  
beast,  
Would track her guilt until he found,  
and hers  
Would be for evermore a name of  
scorn.  
Henceforward rarely could she front  
in Hall,  
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy  
face,

Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye :  
 Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the soul,  
 To help it from the death that cannot die,  
 And save it even in extremes, began  
 To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,  
 Besides the placid breathings of the King,  
 In the dead night, grim faces came and went  
 Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—  
 Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,  
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,  
 That keeps the rust of murder on the walls—  
 Held her awake : or if she slept, she dream'd  
 An awful dream ; for then she seem'd to stand  
 On some vast plain before a setting sun,  
 And from the sun there swiftly made at her  
 A ghastly something, and its shadow flew  
 Before it, till it touch'd her, and she turn'd—  
 When lo ! her own, that broadening from her feet,  
 And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and in it  
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke,  
 And all this trouble did not pass but grew ;  
 Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless King,  
 And trustful courtesies of household life,  
 Became her bane ; and at the last she said,  
 " O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,  
 For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
 And if we meet again, some evil chance

Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze  
 Before the people, and our lord the King."

And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,  
 And still they met and met. Again she said,  
 " O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence."

And then they were agreed upon a night  
 (When the good King should not be there) to meet  
 And part for ever. Passion-pale they met  
 And greeted : hands in hands, and eye to eye,  
 Low on the border of her couch they sat  
 Stammering and staring : it was their last hour,  
 A madness of farewells. And Modred brought  
 His creatures to the basement of the tower  
 For testimony ; and crying with full voice  
 " Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last," aroused  
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lion-like  
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and he fell  
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off  
 And all was still : then she, " the end is come  
 And I am shamed for ever ; " and he said  
 " Mine be the shame ; mine was the sin : but rise,  
 And fly to my strong castle overseas :  
 There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,  
 There hold thee with my life against the world."

She answer'd " Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so ?  
 Nay friend, for we have taken our farewells.  
 Would God, that thou could'st hide me from myself !

Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou  
Unwedded : yet rise now, and let us fly,  
For I will draw me into sanctuary,  
And bide my doom." So Lancelot  
got her horse,  
Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,  
And then they rode to the divided way,  
There kiss'd, and parted weeping for the past,  
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,  
Back to his land ; but she to Almesbury  
Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald,  
And heard the Spirits of the waste and weald  
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them moan :  
And in herself she moan'd " too late, too late !"  
Till in the cold wind that foreruns the morn,  
A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying high,  
Croak'd, and she thought " he spies a field of death ;  
For now the Heathen of the Northern Sea,  
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the court,  
Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land."

And when she came to Almesbury she spake  
There to the nuns, and said, " mine enemies  
Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,  
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask  
Her name, to whom ye yield it, till her time  
To tell you : " and her beauty, grace and power,  
Wrought as a charm upon them, and they spared  
To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode  
For many a week, unknown, among the nuns ;  
Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name, nor sought,  
Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,  
But communed only with the little maid,  
Who pleased her with a babbling heedlessness  
Which often lured her from herself ; but now,  
This night, a rumour wildly blown about  
Came, that Sir Modred had usurped the realm,  
And leagued him with the heathen, while the King  
Was waging war on Lancelot : then she thought,  
" With what a hate the people and the King  
Must hate me," and bow'd down upon her hands  
Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd  
No silence, brake it, uttering " late ! so late !"  
What hour, I wonder, now ? and when she drew  
No answer, by and by began to hum  
An air the nuns had taught her ; " late, so late !"  
Which when she heard, the Queen look'd up, and said,  
" O maiden, if indeed you list to sing, Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep."  
Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.  
" Late, late, so late ! and dark the night and chill !  
Late, late, so late ! but we can enter still.  
Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter now.  
" No light had we : for that we do repent ;  
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.  
Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter now.

“ ‘No light: so late! and dark and  
chill the night!  
O let us in, that we may find the  
light!  
Too late, too late: ye cannot enter  
now.

“ ‘Have we not heard the bride-  
groom is so sweet?  
O let us in, tho’ late, to kiss his feet!  
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter  
now.’ ”

So sang the novice, while full pas-  
sionately,  
Her head upon her hands, remember-  
ing  
Her thought when first she came,  
wept the sad Queen,  
Then said the little novice prattling  
to her.

“ ‘O pray you, noble lady, weep no  
more;  
But let my words, the words of one  
so small,  
Who knowing nothing knows but to  
obey,  
And if I do not there is penance  
given—  
Comfort your sorrows; for they do  
not flow  
From evil done; right sure am I of  
that,  
Who see your tender grace and state-  
liness.  
But weigh your sorrows with our lord  
the King’s,  
And weighing find them less; for gone  
is he  
To wage grim war against Sir Lance-  
lot there,  
Round that strong castle where he  
holds the Queen;  
And Modred whom he left in charge  
of all,  
The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the  
King’s grief  
For his own self, and his own Queen,  
and realm,  
Must needs be thrice as great as any  
of ours.  
For me, I thank the saints, I am not  
great.

For if there ever come a grief to me  
I cry my cry in silence, and have  
done:  
None knows it, and my tears have  
brought me good:  
But even were the griefs of little ones  
As great as those of great ones, yet  
this grief  
Is added to the griefs the great must  
bear,  
That howsoever much they may  
desire  
Silence, they cannot weep behind a  
cloud:  
As even here they talk at Almesbury  
About the good King and his wicked  
Queen,  
And were I such a King with such a  
Queen,  
Well might I wish to veil her wicked-  
ness,  
But were I such a King, it could not  
be.”

Then to her own sad heart mutter’d  
the Queen.  
“ ‘Will the child kill me with her inno-  
cent talk?’ ”  
But openly she answer’d “ must not  
I,  
If this false traitor have displaced his  
lord,  
Grieve with the common grief of all  
the realm?’ ”

“ ‘Yea,’ said the maid, “ this is all  
woman’s grief,  
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal  
life  
Hath wrought confusion in the Table  
Round  
Which good King Arthur founded,  
years ago,  
With signs and miracles and wonders,  
there  
At Camelot, ere the coming of the  
Queen.”

Then thought the Queen within  
herself again;  
“ ‘Will the child kill me with her foolish  
prate?’ ”  
But openly she spake and said to  
her;

"O little maid, shut in by nunnery  
 walls,  
 What canst thou know of Kings and  
 Tables Round,  
 Or what of signs and wonders, but  
 the signs  
 And simple miracles of thy nun-  
 nery ? "

To whom the little novice garru-  
 lously.  
 " Yea, but I know : the land was full  
 of signs  
 And wonders ere the coming of the  
 Queen.  
 So said my father, and himself was  
 knight  
 Of the great Table—at the founding  
 of it ;  
 And rode thereto from Lyonesse,  
 and he said  
 That as he rode, an hour or maybe  
 twain  
 After the sunset, down the coast, he  
 heard  
 Strange music, and he paused and  
 turning—there,  
 All down the lonely coast of Lyon-  
 nesse,  
 Each with a beacon-star upon his  
 head,  
 And with a wild sea-light about his  
 feet,  
 He saw them—headland after head-  
 land flame  
 Far on into the rich heart of the west :  
 And in the light the white mermaiden  
 swam,  
 And strong man-breasted things  
 stood from the sea,  
 And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all  
 the land,  
 To which the little elves of chasm and  
 cleft  
 Made answer, sounding like a distant  
 horn.  
 So said my father—yea, and further-  
 more,  
 Next morning, while he past the dim-  
 lit woods,  
 Himself beheld three spirits mad with  
 joy  
 Come dashing down on a tall wayside  
 flower,

That shook bencath them, as the  
 thistle shakes  
 When three gray linnets wrangle for  
 the seed :  
 And still at evenings on before his  
 horse  
 The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and  
 broke  
 Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd  
 and broke  
 Flying, for all the land was full of life.  
 And when at last he came to Camelot,  
 A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-  
 hand  
 Swung round the lighted lantern of the  
 hall ;  
 And in the hall itself was such a feast  
 As never man had dream'd ; for every  
 knight  
 Had whatsoever meat he long'd for  
 served  
 By hands unseen ; and even as he  
 said  
 Down in the cellars merry bloated  
 things  
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on  
 the butts  
 While the wine ran : so glad were  
 spirits and men  
 Before the coming of the sinful  
 Queen."

Then spake the Queen and some-  
 what bitterly.  
 " Were they so glad ? ill prophets  
 were they all,  
 Spirits and men : could none of them  
 foresee,  
 Not even thy wise father with his signs  
 And wonders, what has fall'n upon  
 the realm ? "

To whom the novice garrulously  
 again.  
 " Yea, one, a bard ; of whom my  
 father said,  
 Full many a noble war-song had he  
 sung,  
 Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's  
 fleet,  
 Between the steep cliff and the com-  
 ing wave ;  
 And many a mystic lay of life and  
 death

Had chant'd on the smoky mountain-tops,  
When round him bent the spirits of the hills  
With all their dewy hair blown back like flame :  
So said my father—and that night the bard  
Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King  
As well-nigh more than man, and rail'd at those  
Who call'd him the false son of Gorlois :  
For there was no man knew from whence he came ;  
But after tempest, when the long wave broke  
All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,  
There came a day as still as heaven, and then  
They found a naked child upon the sands  
Of dark Dundagil by the Cornish sea :  
And that was Arthur ; and they foster'd him  
Till he by miracle was approven king :  
And that his grave should be a mystery  
From all men, like his birth ; and could he find  
A woman in her womanhood as great  
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,  
The twain together well might change the world,  
But even in the middle of his song  
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,  
And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fall'n,  
But that they stay'd him up ; nor would he tell  
His vision ; but what doubt that he foresaw  
This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen ? ”

Then thought the Queen “ lo ! they have set her on,  
Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,

To play upon me,” and bow'd her head nor spake.  
Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,  
Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,  
Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue  
Full often, “ and, sweet lady, if I seem  
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me, unmannerly, with prattling and the tales  
Which my good father told, check me too :  
Nor let me shame my father's memory, one  
Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say  
Sir Lancelot had the noblest ; and he died,  
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,  
And left me ; but of others who remain,  
And of the two first-famed for courtesy—  
And pray you check me if I ask amiss—  
But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved  
Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King ? ”

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her.  
“ Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,  
Was gracious to all ladies, and the same  
In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and the King  
In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and these two  
Were the most nobly-mannered men of all ;  
For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.”

“ Yea,” said the maid, “ be manners such fair fruit ? ”

Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold  
Less noble, being, as all rumour runs,  
The most disloyal friend in all the world."

To which a mournful answer made the Queen.  
" O closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls,  
What knowest thou of the world, and all its lights  
And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe ?  
If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,  
Were for one hour less noble than himself,  
Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,  
And weep for her, who drew him to his doom."

" Yea," said the little novice, " I pray for both ;  
But I should all as soon believe that his,  
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,  
As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be  
Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen."

So she, like many another babbler, hurt  
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where she would heal ;  
For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat  
Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried,  
" Such as thou art be never maiden more  
For ever ! thou their tool, set on to plague  
And play upon, and harry me, petty spy  
And traitress." When that storm of anger brake  
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,  
White as her veil, and stood before the Queen

As tremulously as foam upon the beach  
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,  
And when the Queen had added " get thee hence"  
Fled frightened. Then that other left alone  
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,  
Saying in herself " the simple, fearful child  
Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt  
Simpler than any child, b' trays itself.  
But help me, heaven, for surely I repented.  
For what is true repentance but in thought—  
Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again  
The sins that made the past so pleasant to us :  
And I have sworn never to see him more,  
To see him more." And ev'n in saying this,  
Her memory from old habit of the mind  
Went slipping back upon the golden days  
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,  
Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,  
Ambassador, to lead her to his lord Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead  
Of his and her retinue moving, they, Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love  
And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for the time  
Was maytime, and as yet no sin was dream'd.)  
Rode under groves that look'd a paradise  
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth  
That seem'd the heavens upbreaking thro' the earth,  
And on from hill to hill, and every day  
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale  
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised

For brief repast or afternoon repose  
By couriers gone before ; and on  
again,  
Till yet once more ere set of sun they  
saw  
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-  
ship,  
That crown'd the state pavilion of  
the King.  
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent  
well.

But when the Queen immersed in  
such a trance,  
And moving thro' the past uncon-  
sciously,  
Came to that point, when first she  
saw the King  
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd  
to find  
Her journey done, glanced at him,  
thought him cold,  
High, self-contain'd, and passionless,  
not like him,  
" Not like my Lancelot "—while she  
brooded thus  
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts  
again,  
There rode an armed warrior to the  
doors.  
A murmuring whisper thro' the  
nunnery ran,  
Then on a sudden a cry, " the King."  
She sat  
Stiff-stricken, listening ; but when  
armed feet  
Thro' the long gallery from the outer  
doors  
Rang coming, prone from off her seat  
she fell,  
And grovel'd with her face against  
the floor :  
There with her milkwhite arms and  
shadowy hair  
She made her face a darkness from  
the King :  
And in the darkness heard his armed  
feet  
Pause by her ; then came silence, then  
a voice,  
Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's  
Denouncing judgment, but tho'  
changed the King's.

" Liest thou here so low, the child  
of one  
I honour'd, happy, dead before thy  
shame ?  
Well is it that no child is born of thee.  
The children born of thee are sword  
and fire,  
Red ruin, and the breaking up of  
laws,  
The craft of kindred and the Godless  
hosts  
Of heathen swarming o'er the Nor-  
thern Sea.  
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my  
right arm,  
The mightiest of my knights, abode  
with me,  
Have everywhere about this land of  
Christ  
In twelve great battles ruining over-  
thrown.  
And knowest thou now from whence  
I come—from him,  
From waging bitter war with him :  
and he,  
That did not shun to smite me in  
worse way,  
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him  
left,  
He spared to lift his hand against the  
King  
Who made him knight : but many a  
knight was slain ;  
And many more, and all his kith and  
kin  
Clave to him, and abode in his own  
land.  
And many more when Modred raised  
revolt,  
Forgetful of their troth and fealty,  
clave  
To Modred, and a remnant stays with  
me.  
And of this remnant will I leave a  
part,  
True men who love me still, for whom  
I live,  
To guard thee in the wild hour com-  
ing on,  
Lest but a hair of this low head be  
harm'd.  
Fear not : thou shalt be guarded till  
my death,  
Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies

Have err'd not, that I march to meet  
my doom.  
Thou hast not made my life so sweet  
to me,  
That I the King should greatly care  
to live ;  
For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my  
life.  
Bear with me for the last time while  
I show,  
Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou  
hast sinn'd.  
For when the Roman left us, and  
their law  
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways  
Were fill'd with rapine, here and  
there a deed  
Of prowess done redress'd a random  
wrong.  
But I was first of all the kings who  
drew  
The knighthood-errant of this realm  
and all  
The realms together under me, their  
Head,  
In that fair order of my Table Round,  
A glorious company, the flower of  
men,  
To serve as model for the mighty  
world,  
And be the fair beginning of a time.  
I made them lay their hands in mine  
and swear  
To reverence the King, as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience  
as their King,  
To break the heathen and uphold the  
Christ,  
To ride abroad redressing human  
wrongs,  
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to  
it,  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to  
her,  
And worship her by years of noble  
deeds,  
Until they won her ; for indeed I  
knew  
Of no more subtle master under hea-  
ven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in  
man,

But teach high thought, and amiable  
words  
And courtliness, and the desire of  
fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes  
a man,  
And all this thrrove until I wedded  
thee !  
Believing 'lo mine helpmate, one to  
feel  
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy."  
Then came thy shameful sin with  
Lancelot ;  
Then came the sin of Tristram and  
Isolt ;  
Then others, following these my  
mightyest knights,  
And drawing foul ensample from fair  
names,  
Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite  
Of all my heart had destined did ob-  
tain,  
And all thro' thee ! so that this life of  
mine  
I guard as God's high gift from scathe  
and wrong,  
Not greatly care to lose ; but rather  
think  
How sad it were for Arthur, should  
he live,  
To sit once more within his lonely  
hall,  
And miss the wonted number of my  
knights,  
And miss to hear high talk of noble  
deeds  
As in the golden days before thy sin.  
For which of us, who might be left,  
could speak  
Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance  
at thee ?  
And in thy bowers of Camelot or of  
Usk  
Thy shadow still would glide from  
room to room,  
And I should evermore be vext with  
thee  
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the  
stair.  
For think not, tho' thou would'st not  
love thy lord,  
Thy lord has wholly lost his love for  
thee.

I am not made of so slight elements.  
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy  
 shame.  
 I hold that man the worst of public  
 foes  
 Who either for his own or children's  
 sake,  
 To save his blood from scandal, lets  
 the wife  
 Whom he knows false, abide and rule  
 the house :  
 For being thro' his cowardice allow'd  
 Her station, taken everywhere for  
 pure,  
 She like a new disease, unknown to  
 men,  
 Creeps, no precaution used, among  
 the crowd,  
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes,  
 and saps  
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs  
 the pulse  
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half  
 the young.  
 Worst of the worst were that man he  
 that reigns !  
 Better the King's waste hearth and  
 aching heart  
 Than thou reseated in thy place of  
 light.  
 The mockery of my people, and their  
 bane."

He paused, and in the pause she  
 crept an inch  
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his  
 feet.  
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.  
 Then waiting by the doors the war-  
 horse neigh'd  
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake  
 again.

" Yet think not that I come to urge  
 thy crimes,  
 I did not come to curse thee, Guine-  
 vere,  
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me  
 die  
 To see thee, laying there thy golden  
 head,  
 My pride in happier summers, at my  
 feet.

The wrath which forced my thoughts  
 on that fierce law,  
 The doom of treason and the flaming  
 death,  
 (When first I learnt thee hidden here)  
 is past.  
 The pang—which while I weigh'd thy  
 heart with one  
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in  
 thee,  
 Made my tears burn—is also past, in  
 part.  
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and  
 I,  
 Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
 Forgives : do thou for thine own soul  
 the rest.  
 But how to take last leave of all I  
 loved ?  
 O golden hair, with which I used to  
 play  
 Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded  
 form,  
 And beauty such as never woman  
 wore,  
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with  
 thee—  
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not  
 mine,  
 But Lancilot's : nay, they never were  
 the King's.  
 I cannot take thy hand ; that too is  
 flesh,  
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and  
 mine own flesh,  
 Here looking down on thine polluted,  
 cries  
 ' I loathe thee : ' yet not less, O  
 Guinevere,  
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into  
 my life  
 So far, that my doom is, I love thee  
 still.  
 Let no man dream but that I love  
 thee still.  
 Perchance, and so thou purify thy  
 soul,  
 And so thou lean on our fair father  
 Christ,  
 Hereafter in that world where all are  
 pure  
 We two may meet before high God,  
 and thou

Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine,  
 and know  
 I am thine husband—not a smaller  
 soul,  
 Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave  
 me that,  
 I charge thee, my last hope. Now  
 must I hence.  
 Thro' the thick night I hear the trum-  
 pet blow :  
 They summon me their King to lead  
 mine hosts  
 Far down to that great battle in the  
 west,  
 Where I must strike against my  
 sister's son,  
 Leagued with the lords of the White  
 Horse and knights  
 Once mine, and strike him dead, and  
 meet myself  
 Death, or I know not what mysterious  
 doom.  
 And thou remaining here wilt learn the  
 event ;  
 But hither shall I never come again,  
 Never lie by thy side, see thee no  
 more,  
 Farewell ! ”  
 And while she grovell'd at his feet,  
 She felt the King's breath wander  
 o'er her neck,  
 And, in the darkness o'er her fallen  
 head,  
 Perceived the waving of his hands  
 that blest.  
 Then, listening till those armed  
 steps were gone,  
 Rose the pale Queen, and in her  
 anguish found  
 The casement : “ peradventure ” so  
 she thought,  
 “ If I might see his face, and not be  
 seen.”  
 And lo, he sat on horseback at the  
 door !  
 And near him the sad nuns with each  
 a light  
 Stood, and he gave them charge about  
 the Queen,  
 To guard and foster her for ever-  
 more.  
 And while he spake to these his helm  
 was lower'd,

To which for crest the golden dragon  
 clung  
 Of Britain ; so she did not see the face,  
 Which then was as an angel's, but she  
 saw,  
 Wet with the mists and smitten by the  
 lights,  
 The Dragon of the great Pendragon-  
 ship  
 Blaze, making all the night a steam  
 of fire.  
 And even then he turn'd ; and more  
 and more  
 The moony vapour rolling round the  
 King,  
 Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant  
 in it,  
 Enwound him fold by fold, and made  
 him gray  
 And grayer, till himself became as  
 mist  
 Before her, moving ghostlike to his  
 doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms  
 and cried aloud  
 “ Oh Arthur ! ” there her voice brake  
 suddenly,  
 Then—as a stream that spouting  
 from a cliff  
 Falls in mid air, but gathering at the  
 base  
 Re-makes itself, and flashes down the  
 vale—  
 Went on in passionate utterance.

“ Gone—my lord !  
 Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be  
 slain !  
 And he forgave me, and I could not  
 speak.  
 Farewell ? I should have answer'd his  
 farewell.  
 His mercy choked me. Gone, my  
 lord the King,  
 My own true lord ! how dare I call him  
 mine ?  
 The shadow of another cleaves to me,  
 And makes me one pollution : he, the  
 King,  
 Call'd me polluted : shall I kill my-  
 self ?  
 What help in that ? I cannot kill my  
 sin,

If soul be soul ; nor can I kill my shame ;	Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none
No, nor by living can I live it down.	Will tell the King I love him tho' so late ?
The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,	Now—ere he goes to the great Battle? none :
The months will add themselves and make the years,	Myself must tell him in that purer life,
The years will roll into the centuries,	But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.	What might I not have made of thy fair world,
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.	Had I but loved thy highest creature here ?
Let the world be ; that is but of the world.	It was my duty to have loved the highest :
What else ? what hope ? I think there was a hope,	It surely was my profit had I known : It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope ;	We needs must love the highest when we see it,
His hope he call'd it ; but he never mocks,	Not Lancelot, nor another."
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.	Here her hand Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes : she look'd and saw
And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven	The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her
My wickedness to him, and left me hope	" Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven ? "
That in mine own heart I can live down sin	Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens	All round her, weeping ; and her heart was loosed
Before high God. Ah great and gentle lord,	Within her, and she wept with these and said.
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint	" Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke
Among his warring senses, to thy knights—	The vast design and purpose of the King.
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took	O shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,
Full easily all impressions from below, Would not look up, or half-despised the height	Meek maidens, from the voices crying ' shame.'
To which I would not or I could not climb—	I must not scorn myself : he loves me still.
I thought I could not breathe in that fine air	Let no one dream but that he loves me still.
That pure severity of perfect light—	So let me, if you do not shudder at me
I wanted warmth and colour which I found	Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you ;
In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art,	Wear black and white, and be a nun like you ;
Thou art the highest and most human too,	

Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts ; Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys, But not rejoicing ; mingle with your rites ; Pray and be pray'd for ; lie before your shrines ; Do each low office of your holy house ; Walk your dim cloister, and distri- bute dole To poor sick people, richer in his eyes Who ransom'd us, and halter too than I ; And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own ; And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer The sombre close of that voluptuous day.	Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King." She said : they took her to them- selves ; and she Still hoping, fearing " is it yet too late ? " Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess died. Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life, And for the power of ministration in her, And likewise for the high rank she had borne, Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess, lived For three brief years, and there, an Abbess, past To where beyond these voices there is peace.
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## ENOCH ARDEN, AND OTHER POEMS

### ENOCH ARDEN

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left  
a chasm ;  
And in the chasm are foam and  
yellow sands ;  
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow  
wharf  
In cluster ; then a moulder'd church ;  
and higher  
A long street climbs to one tall-  
tower'd mill ;  
And high in heaven behind it a gray  
down  
With Danish barrows ; and a hazel-  
wood,  
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes  
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years  
ago,  
Three children of three houses, Annie  
Lee,  
The prettiest little damsel in the port,  
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,  
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's  
lad  
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck,  
play'd  
Among the waste and lumber of the  
shore,  
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fish-  
ing-nets,  
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats up-  
drawn.  
And built their castles of dissolving  
sand  
To watch them overflow'd, or follow-  
ing up  
And flying the white breaker, daily  
left  
The little footprint daily wash'd  
away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the  
cliff :  
In this the children play'd at keeping  
house.  
Enoch was host one day, Philip the  
next,  
While Annie still was mistress ; but  
at times  
Enoch would hold possession for a  
week :  
" This is my house and this my little  
wife."  
" Mine too " said Philip " turn and  
turn about : "  
When, if they quarrel'd, Enoch  
stronger-made  
Was master : then would Philip, his  
blue eyes  
All flooded with the helpless wrath of  
tears,  
Shriek out " I hate you, Enoch," and  
at this  
The little wife would weep for com-  
pany,  
And pray them not to quarrel for  
her sake,  
And say she would be little wife to  
both.  
But when the dawn of rosy child-  
hood past,  
And the new warmth of life's ascend-  
ing sun  
Was felt by either, either fixt his  
heart  
On that one girl ; and Enoch spoke  
his love,  
But Philip loved in silence ; and the  
girl  
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to  
him ;  
But she loved Enoch ; tho' she knew  
it not,

And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch  
set  
A purpose evermore before his eyes,  
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,  
To purchase his own boat, and make  
a home  
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at  
last  
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,  
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe  
For leagues along that breaker-  
beaten coast  
Than Enoch. Likewise had he  
serv'd a year  
On board a merchantman, and made  
himself  
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd  
a life  
From the dread sweep of the down-  
streaming seas:  
And all men look'd upon him favour-  
ably:  
And ere he touch'd his one-and-  
twentieth May  
He purchased his own boat, and made  
a home  
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway  
up  
The narrow street that clamber'd  
toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn even-  
tide,  
The younger people making holiday,  
With bag and sack and basket, great  
and small,  
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip  
stay'd  
(His father lying sick and needing  
him)  
An hour behind; but as he climb'd  
the hill,  
Just where the prone edge of the  
wood began  
To feather toward the hollow, saw the  
pair,  
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-  
hand,  
His large gray eyes and weather-  
beaten face  
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,  
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip  
look'd,

And in their eyes and faces read his  
doom;  
Then, as their faces drew together,  
groan'd.  
And slipt aside, and like a wounded  
life  
Crept down into the hollows of the  
wood;  
There, while the rest were loud in  
merrymaking,  
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose  
and past  
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily  
rang the bells,  
And merrily ran the years, seven  
happy years,  
Seven happy years of health and  
competence,  
And mutual love and honourable  
toil;  
With children; first a daughter. In  
him woke,  
With his first babe's first cry, the  
noble wish  
To save all earnings to the utter-  
most,  
And give his child a better bringing-  
up  
Than his had been, or hers; a wish  
renew'd,  
When two years after came a boy to  
be  
The rosy idol of her solitudes,  
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful  
seas,  
Or often journeying landward; for in  
truth  
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's  
ocean-spoil  
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,  
Rough-redden'd with a thousand  
winter gales,  
Not only to the market-cross were  
known,  
But in the leafy lanes behind the  
down,  
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,  
And peacock-yewtree of the lonely  
Hall,  
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's minis-  
tering.

Then came a change, as all things human change.  
 Ten miles to northward of the narrow port  
 Open'd a larger haven : thither used Enoch at times to go by land or sea : And once when there, and clambering on a mast  
 In harbour, by mischance he slipt and fell :  
 A limb was broken when they lifted him : And while he lay recovering there, his wife  
 Bore him another son, a sickly one : Another hand crept too across his trade  
 Taking her bread and theirs : and on him fell, Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,  
 Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.  
 He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,  
 To see his children leading evermore Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,  
 And her, he loved, a beggar : then he pray'd  
 " Save them from this, whatever comes to me."  
 And while he pray'd, the master of that ship  
 Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,  
 Came, for he knew the man and valued him,  
 Reporting of his vessel China-bound, And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go ?  
 There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,  
 Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place ? And Enoch all at once assented to it, Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd  
 No graver than as when some little cloud  
 Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,

And isles a light in the offing : yet the wife—  
 When he was gone—the children— what to do ?  
 Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans : To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—  
 How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her ! He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse—  
 And yet to sell her—then with what she brought  
 Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade  
 With all that seamen needed or their wives—  
 So might she keep the house while he was gone.  
 Should he not trade himself out yonder ? go  
 This voyage more than once ? yea twice or thrice—  
 As oft as needed—last, returning rich, Become the master of a larger craft, With fuller profits lead an easier life, Have all his pretty young ones educated,  
 And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all : Then moving homeward came on Annie pale, Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.  
 Forward she started with a happy cry,  
 And laid the feeble infant in his arms : Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,  
 Appraised his weight and fondled fatherlike,  
 But had no heart to break his purposcs  
 To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt  
 Her finger, Annie fought against his will :

Yet not with brawling opposition she,  
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,  
Many a sad kiss by day by night  
renew'd

(Sure that all evil would come out of  
it)

Besought him, supplicating, if he  
cared

For her or his dear children, not to go.  
He not for his own self caring but her,  
Her and her children, let her plead in  
vain;

So grieving held his will, and bore it  
thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-  
friend,

Bought Annie goods and stores, and  
set his hand  
To fit their little streetward sitting-  
room

With shelf and corner for the goods  
and stores.

So all day long till Enoch's last at  
home,

Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer  
and axe,

Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to  
hear

Her own death-scaffold raising,  
shril'd and rang,  
Till this was ended, and his careful  
hand,—

The space was narrow,—having  
order'd all

Almost as neat and close as Nature  
packs

Her blossom or her seedling, paused ;  
and he,

Who needs would work for Annie to  
the last,

Ascending tired, heavily slept till  
morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of  
farewell

Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's  
fears,

Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter  
to him.

Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing  
man

Bow'd himself down, and in that  
mystery

Where God-in-man is one with man-  
in-God,

Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and  
babes

Whatever came to him : and then he  
said

" Annie, this voyage by the grace of  
God

Will bring fair weather yet to all of  
us.

Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire  
for me,

For I'll be back, my girl, before you  
know it."

Then lightly rocking baby's cradle  
" and he,

This pretty, puny, weakly little  
one,—

Nay—for I love him all the better  
for it—

God bless him, he shall sit upon my  
knees

And I will tell him tales of foreign  
parts,

And make him merry, when I come  
home again.

Come Annie, come, cheer up before  
I go."

Him running on thus hopefully she  
heard,

And almost hoped herself ; but when  
he turn'd

The current of his talk to graver  
things

In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing  
On providence and trust in Heaven,  
she heard,

Heard and not heard him ; as the  
village girl,

Who sets her pitcher underneath the  
spring,

Musing on him that used to fill it  
for her,

Hears and not hears, and lets it  
overflow.

At length she spoke " O Enoch, you  
are wise ;

And yet for all your wisdom well  
know I

That I shall look upon your face no  
more."

" Well then," said Enoch, " I shall look on yours.  
 Annie, the ship I sail in passes here  
 (He named the day) get you a sea-  
 man's glass,  
 Spy out my face, and laugh at all  
 your fears."

But when the last of those last  
 moments came,  
 " Annie, my girl, cheer up, be com-  
 forted,  
 Look to the babes, and till I come  
 again,  
 Keep everything shipshape, for I  
 must go.  
 And fear no more for me ; or if you  
 fear  
 Cast all your cares on God ; that  
 anchor holds.  
 Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
 Parts of the morning ? if I flee to  
 these  
 Can I go from Him ? and the sea is  
 His,  
 The sea is His : He made it."

Enoch rose,  
 Cast his strong arms about his droop-  
 ing wife,  
 And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little  
 ones ;  
 But for the third, the sickly one, who  
 slept  
 After a night of feverous wakefulness,  
 When Annie would have raised him  
 Enoch said  
 " Wake him not ; let him sleep ; how  
 should the child  
 Remember this ? " and kiss'd him in  
 his cot.  
 But Annie from her baby's forehead  
 clipt  
 A tiny curl, and gave it : this he kept  
 Thro' all his future ; but now hastily  
 caught  
 His bundle, waved his hand, and  
 went his way.

She when the day, that Enoch  
 mention'd, came,  
 Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain :  
 perhaps

She could not fix the glass to suit her  
 eye ;  
 Perhaps her eye was dim, hand  
 tremulous ;  
 She saw him not : and while he stood  
 on deck  
 Waving, the moment and the vessel  
 past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanish-  
 ing sail  
 She watch'd it, and departed weeping  
 for him ;  
 Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as  
 his grave,  
 Set her sad will no less to chime with  
 his,  
 But threw not in her trade, not being  
 bred  
 To barter, nor compensating the want  
 By shrewdness, neither capable of  
 lies,  
 Nor asking overmuch and taking less,  
 And still foreboding " what would  
 Enoch say ? "  
 For more than once, in days of  
 difficulty  
 And pressure, had she sold her wares  
 for less  
 Than what she gave in buying what  
 she sold :  
 She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it ;  
 and thus,  
 Expectant of that news which never  
 came,  
 Gain'd for her own a scanty susten-  
 ance,  
 And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born  
 and grew  
 Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared  
 for it  
 With all a mother's care : neverthe-  
 less,  
 Whether her business often call'd her  
 from it,  
 Or thro' the want of what it needed  
 most,  
 Or means to pay the voice who best  
 could tell  
 What most it needed—howsoe'er it  
 was,

After a lingering—ere she was aware,—  
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,  
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,  
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her peace  
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her),  
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.  
"Surely" said Philip "I may see her now,  
May be some little comfort;" therefore went,  
Past thro' the solitary room in front,  
Paused for a moment at an inner door,  
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,  
Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,  
Fresh from the burial of her little one, Car'd not to look on any human face,  
But turn'd her own toward the wall and wept.  
Then Philip standing up said falteringly  
"Annie, I came to ask a favour of you."

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd reply  
"Favour from one so sad and so forlorn  
As I am!" half abash'd him; yet unask'd,  
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,  
He set himself beside her, saying to her:  
"I came to speak to you of what he wish'd,  
Enoch, your husband: I have ever said  
You chose the best among us—a strong man  
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand  
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.

And wherefore did he go this weary way,  
And leave you lonely? not to see the world—  
For pleasure?—nay, but for the wherewithal  
To give his babes a better bringing-up  
Than his had been, or yours: that was his wish.  
And if he come again, vext will he be  
To find the precious morning hours were lost.  
And it would vex him even in his grave,  
If he could know his babes were running wild  
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie, now—  
Have we not known each other all our lives?  
I do beseech you by the love you bear  
Him and his children not to say me nay—  
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again  
Why then he shall repay me—if you will,  
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.  
Now let me put the boy and girl to school:  
This is the favour that I came to ask."

Then Annie with her brows against the wall  
Answer'd "I cannot look you in the face;  
I seem so foolish and so broken down.  
When you came in my sorrow broke me down;  
And now I think your kindness breaks me down;  
But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me:  
He will repay you: money can be repaid;  
Not kindness such as yours."

And Philip ask'd  
"Then you will let me, Annie?"

There she turn'd,  
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,

And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,  
Then calling down a blessing on his head  
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,  
And past into the little garth beyond.  
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,  
And bought them needful books, and everyway,  
Like one who does his duty by his own.  
Made himself theirs ; and tho' for Annie's sake,  
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,  
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,  
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent  
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,  
The late and early roses from his wall,  
Or conies from the down, and now and then,  
With some pretext of fineness in the meal  
To save the offence of charitable flour  
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind :  
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,  
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude  
Light on a broken word to thank him with.  
But Philip was her children's all-in-all ;  
From distant corners of the street they ran  
To greet his hearty welcome heartily ;  
Lords of his house and of his mill were they ;  
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs  
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him  
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd

As Enoch lost ; for Enoch seem'd to them  
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,  
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn  
Down at the far end of an avenue,  
Going we know not where : and so  
ton years,  
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,  
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd  
To go with others, nutting to the wood,  
And Annie would go with them ; then they begg'd  
For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too :  
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,  
Blanch'd with his mill, they found ; and saying to him  
" Come with us Father Philip " he denied ;  
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,  
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,  
For was not Annie with them ? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,  
Just where the prone edge of the wood began  
To feather toward the hollow, all her force  
Fail'd her ; and sighing " let me rest " she said :  
So Philip rested with her well-content ;  
While all the younger ones with jubilant cries  
Broke from their elders, and tumultuously  
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge  
To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke  
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away

Their tawny clusters, crying to each other  
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot  
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour  
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life  
He crept into the shadow : at last he said  
Lifting his honest forehead " Listen, Annie,  
How merry they are down yonder in the wood."  
" Tired, Annie ? " for she did not speak a word.  
" Tired ? " but her face had fall'n upon her hands ;  
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,  
" The ship was lost " he said " the ship was lost.  
No more of that ! why should you kill yourself  
And make them orphans quite ? "  
And Annie said  
" I thought not of it : but—I know not why—  
Their voices make me feel so solitary."

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.  
" Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,  
And it has been upon my mind so long,  
That tho' I know not when it first came there,  
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,  
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,  
That he who left you ten long years ago  
Should still be living ; well then—let me speak :  
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help :  
I cannot help you as I wish to do  
Unless—they say that women are so quick—

Perhaps you know what I would have you know—  
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove  
A father to your children : I do think They love me as a father : I am sure That I love them as if they were mine own ;  
And I believe, if you were fast my wife, That after all these sad uncertain years, We might be still as happy as God grants  
To any of His creatures. Think upon it :  
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care, No burthen, save my care for you and yours :  
And we have known each other all our lives, And I have loved you longer than you know."  
Then answer'd Annie ; tenderly she spoke :  
" You have been as God's good angel in our house.  
God bless you for it, God reward you for it, Philip, with something happier than myself.  
Can one love twice ? can you be ever loved  
As Enoch was ? what is it that you ask ? "  
" I am content " he answer'd " to be loved  
A little after Enoch." " O " she cried Scared as it were " dear Philip, wait a while :  
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—  
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long : Surely I shall be wiser in a year :  
O wait a little ! " Philip sadly said  
" Annie, as I have waited all my life I well may wait a little." " Nay " she cried  
" I am bound : you have my promise—in a year :  
Will you not bide your year as I bide mine ? "  
And Philip answer'd " I will bide my year."

Here both were mute, till Philip  
glancing up  
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen  
day  
Pass from the Danish barrow over-  
head ;  
Then fearing night and chill for Annie  
rose,  
And sent his voice beneath him thro'  
the wood.  
Up came the children laden with their  
spoil ;  
Then all descended to the port, and  
there  
At Annie's door he paused and gave  
his hand,  
Saying gently " Annie, when I spoke  
to you,  
That was your hour of weakness. I  
was wrong.  
I am always bound to you, but you  
are free."  
Then Annie weeping answer'd " I  
am bound."

She spoke ; and in one moment as  
it were,  
While yet she went about her house-  
hold ways,  
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest  
words,  
That he had loved her longer than  
she knew,  
That autumn into autumn flash'd  
again,  
And there he stood once more before  
her face,  
Claiming her promise. " Is it a year ?"  
she ask'd.  
" Yes, if the nuts " he said " be ripe  
again :  
Come out and see." But she—she  
put him off—  
So much to look to—such a change—  
a month—  
Give her a month—she knew that she  
was bound—  
A month—no more. Then Philip  
with his eyes  
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his  
voice  
Shaking a little like a drunkard's  
hand,

" Take your own time, Annie, take  
your own time."  
And Annie could have wept for pity  
of him ;  
And yet she held him on delaying  
With many a scarce-believable excuse,  
Trying his truth and his long-suffer-  
ance,  
Till half-another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,  
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,  
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.  
Some thought that Philip did but  
trifle with her ;  
Some that she but held off to draw  
him on ;  
And others laugh'd at her and Philip  
too,  
As simple folk that knew not their  
own minds ;  
And one, in whom all evil fancies  
clung  
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly  
Would hint at worse in either. Her  
own son  
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his  
wish ;  
But evermore the daughter prest  
upon her  
To wed the man so dear to all of them  
And lift the household out of poverty ;  
And Philip's rosy face contracting  
grew  
Careworn and wan ; and all these  
things fell on her  
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced  
That Annie could not sleep, but  
earnestly  
Pray'd for a sign " my Enoch is he  
gone ? "  
Then compass'd round by the blind  
wall of night  
Brook'd not the expectant terror of  
her heart,  
Started from bed, and struck herself  
a light,  
Then desperately seized the holy  
Book,  
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
Suddenly put her finger on the text,

"Under a palmtree." That was nothing to her: No meaning there: she closed the Book and slept: When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height, Under a palmtree, over him the Sun: "He is gone" she thought "he is happy, he is singing Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms Whereof the happy people strewing cried "Hosanna in the highest!" "Here she woke, Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him "There is no reason why we should not wed." "Then for God's sake," he answer'd, "both our sakes, So you will wed me, let it be at once." So these were wed and merrily rang the bells, Merrily rang the bells and they were wed. But never merrily beat Annie's heart. A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path, She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear, She knew not what; nor loved she to be left. Alone at home, nor ventured out alone. What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd, often Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch, Fearing to enter: Philip thought he knew: Such doubts and fears were common to her state, Being with child: but when her child was born, Then her new child was as herself renew'd, Then the new mother came about her heart, Then her good Philip was her all-in-all, And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch? prosperously sail'd The ship "Good Fortune," tho' at setting forth The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvect She slipt across the summer of the world, Then after a long tumble about the Cape And frequent interchange of foul and fair, She passing thro' the summer world again, The breath of heaven came continually And sent her sweetly by the golden isles, Till silent in her oriental haven. There Enoch traded for himself, and bought Quaint monsters for the market of those times, A gilded dragon, also, for the babes. Less lucky her home-voyage: at first indeed Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day, Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows: Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable, Then baffling, a long course of them; and last Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens Till hard upon the cry of "breakers" came The crash of ruin, and the loss of all But Enoch and two others. Half the night, Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars, These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea. No want was there of human sustenance,

Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots ;  
Nor save for pity was it hard to take The helpless life so wild that it was tame.  
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge  
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,  
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,  
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness, Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,  
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,  
Lay lingering out a three-years' death-in-life.  
They could not leave him. After he was gone,  
The two remaining found a fallen stem ;  
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,  
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell  
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.  
In those two deaths he read God's warning "wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns  
And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,  
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,  
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,  
The lustre of the long convolvuluses That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran  
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows  
And glories of the broad belt of the world,  
All these he saw ; but what he faint had seen  
He could not see, the kindly human face.

Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard  
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,  
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,  
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd  
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep  
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,  
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long  
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,  
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail :  
No sail from day to day, but every day  
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts  
Among the palms and ferns and precipices ;  
The blaze upon the waters to the east ;  
The blaze upon his island overhead ;  
The blaze upon the waters to the west ;  
Then the great stars that globed themselves in Heaven,  
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again  
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,  
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,  
A phantom made of many phantoms moved  
Before him haunting him, or he himself  
Moved haunting people, things and places, known  
Far in a darker isle beyond the line ;  
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,  
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,  
The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,  
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill

November dawns and dewy-glooming  
downs,  
The gentle shower, the smell of dying  
leaves,  
And the low moan of leaden-colour'd  
seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his  
ears,  
Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far  
away—  
He heard the pealing of his parish  
bells ;  
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore,  
started up  
Shuddering, and when the beauteous  
hateful isle  
Return'd upon him, had not his poor  
heart  
Spoken with That, which being every-  
where  
Leis none, who speaks with Him,  
seem all alone,  
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering  
head  
The sunny and rainy seasons came  
and went  
Year after year. His hopes to see  
his own,  
And pace the sacred old familiar  
fields,  
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely  
doom  
Came suddenly to an end. Another  
ship  
(She wanted water) blown by baffling  
winds,  
Like the Good Fortune, from her  
destined course,  
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where  
she lay :  
For since the mate had seen at early  
dawn  
Across a break on the mist-wreathen  
isle  
The silent water slipping from the  
hills,  
They sent a crew that landing burst  
away  
In search of stream or fount, and  
fill'd the shores

With clamour. Downward from his  
mountain gorge  
Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded  
solitary,  
Brown, looking hardly human,  
strangely clad,  
Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike  
it seem'd,  
With inarticulate rage, and making  
signs  
They knew not what : and yet he led  
the way  
To where the rivulets of sweet water  
ran ;  
And ever as he mingled with the  
crew,  
And heard them talking, his long-  
bounden tongue  
Was loosen'd, till he made them under-  
stand ;  
Whom, when their casks were fill'd  
they took aboard :  
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,  
Scarce credited at first but more and  
more,  
Amazed and melted all who listen'd  
to it :  
And clothes they gave him and free  
passage home ;  
But oft he work'd among the rest  
and shook  
His isolation from him. None of  
these  
Came from his county, or could  
answer him,  
If question'd, aught of what he cared  
to know.  
And dull the voyage was with long  
delays,  
The vessel scarce sea-worthy ; but  
evermore  
His fancy fled before the lazy wind  
Returning, till beneath a clouded  
moon  
He like a lover down thro' all his blood  
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-  
breath  
Of England, blown across her ghostly  
wall :  
And that same morning officers and  
men  
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,  
Pitying the lonely man, and gave  
him it :

Then moving up the coast they landed him,  
Ev'n in that harbour whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to anyone,  
But homeward—home—what home?  
had he a home?  
His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,  
Sunny but chill; till drawn thro'  
either chasm,  
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,  
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in gray;  
Cut off the length of highway on before,  
And left but narrow breadth to left and right  
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.  
On the nigh-naked tree the Robin piped  
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze  
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down:  
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom;  
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light  
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,  
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,  
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home  
Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes  
In those far-off seven happy years were born;  
But finding neither light nor murmur there  
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept  
Still downward thinking "dead or dead to me!"

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,

Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,  
A front of timber-crost antiquity,  
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,  
He thought it must have gone; but he was gone  
Who kept it; and his widow, Miriam Lane,  
With daily-dwindling profits held the house;  
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now  
Stiller, with yet a bed for wandering men.  
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,  
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,  
Told him, with other annals of the port,  
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,  
So broken—all the story of his house,  
His baby's death, her growing poverty,  
How Philip put her little ones to school,  
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,  
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth  
Of Philip's child: and o'er his countenance  
No shadow past, nor motion: anyone,  
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale  
Less than the teller: only when she closed  
"Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost"  
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,  
Repeated muttering "cast away and lost;"  
Again in deeper inward whispers "lost!"

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again;  
"If I might look on her sweet face again

And know that she is happy." So  
the thought  
Haunted and harass'd him, and  
drove him forth,  
At evening when the dull November  
day  
Was growing duller twilight, to the  
hill.  
There he sat down gazing on all  
below ;  
There did a thousand memories roll  
upon him,  
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by  
The ruddy square of comfortable  
light,  
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's  
house,  
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze  
allures  
The bird of passage, till he madly  
strikes  
Against it, and beats out his weary  
life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the  
street,  
The latest house to landward ; but  
behind,  
With one small gate that open'd on  
the waste,  
Flourish'd a little garden square and  
wall'd :  
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,  
A yewtree, and all round it ran a  
walk  
Of shingle, and a walk divided it :  
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk  
and stole  
Up by the wall, behind the yew ; and  
thence  
That which he better might have  
shunn'd, if griefs  
Like his have worse or better, Enoch  
saw.

For cups and silver on the burn-  
ish'd board  
Sparkled and shone ; so genial was  
the hearth :  
And on the right hand of the hearth  
he saw  
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,  
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his  
knees ;

And o'er her second father stoopt a  
girl,  
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,  
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her  
lifted hand  
Dangled a length of ribbon and a  
ring  
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his  
creasy arms,  
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and  
they laugh'd :  
And on the left hand of the hearth he  
saw  
The mother glancing often toward  
her babe,  
But turning now and then to speak  
with him,  
Her son, who stood beside her tall  
and strong,  
And saying that which pleased him,  
for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to  
life beheld  
His wife his wife no more, and saw  
the babe  
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's  
knee,  
And all the warmth, the peace, the  
happiness,  
And his own children tall and beauti-  
ful,  
And him, that other, reigning in his  
place,  
Lord of his rights and of his children's  
love,—  
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told  
him all,  
Because things seen are mightier than  
things heard,  
Stagger'd and shook, holding the  
branch, and fear'd  
To send abroad a shrill and terrible  
cry,  
Which in one moment, like the blast  
of doom,  
Would shatter all the happiness of the  
hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a  
thief,  
Lest the harsh shingle should grate  
underfoot,  
And feeling all along the garden-wall,

Lest he should swoon and tumble and  
be found,  
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and  
closed,  
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-  
door,  
Behind him, and came out upon the  
waste.

And there he would have knelt,  
but that his knees  
Were feeble, so that falling prone he  
dug  
His fingers into the wet earth, and  
pray'd.

" Too hard to bear ! why did they  
take me thence ?  
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour,  
Thou  
That didst uphold me on my lonely  
isle,  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
A little longer ! aid me, give me  
strength  
Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
Help me not to break in upon her  
peace.  
My children too ! must I not speak to  
these ?  
They know me not. I should betray  
myself.  
Never : no father's kiss for me—the  
girl  
So like her mother, and the boy, my  
son."

There speech and thought and  
nature fail'd a little,  
And he lay tranced ; but when he rose  
and paced  
Back toward his solitary home again,  
All down the long and narrow street  
he went  
Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burthen of a song.  
" Not to tell her, never to let her  
know."

He was not all unhappy. His re-  
solve  
Uphore him, and firm faith, and ever-  
more

Prayer from a living source within  
the will,  
And beating up thro' all the bitter  
world,  
Like fountains of sweet water in the  
sea,  
Kept him a living soul. " This  
miller's wife "  
He said to Miriam " that you told me  
of,  
Has she no fear that her first husband  
lives ? "  
" Ay, ay, poor soul " said Miriam,  
" fear enow !  
If you could tell her you had seen him  
dead,  
Why, that would be her comfort ; "  
and he thought  
" After the Lord has call'd me she  
shall know,  
I wait His time " and Enoch set him-  
self,  
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to  
live.  
Almost to all things could he turn his  
hand.  
Cooper he was and carpenter, and  
wrought  
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or  
help'd  
At lading and unlading the tall barks,  
That brought the stinted commerce  
of those days ;  
Thus earn'd a scanty living for him-  
self :  
Yet since he did but labour for him-  
self,  
Work without hope, there was not  
life in it  
Whereby the man could live ; and as  
the year  
Roll'd itself round again to meet the  
day  
When Enoch had return'd, a languor  
came  
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually  
Weakening the man, till he could do  
no more,  
But kept the house, his chair, and last  
his bed.  
And Enoch bore his weakness cheer-  
fully.  
For sure no gladlier does the stranded  
wreck

See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting  
squall  
The boat that bears the hope of life  
approach  
To save the life despair'd of, than he  
saw  
Death dawning on him, and the close  
of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a  
kindlier hope  
On Enoch thinking " after I am gone,  
Then may she learn I loved her to  
the last."  
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and  
said  
" Woman, I have a secret—only  
swear,  
Before I tell you—swear upon the  
book  
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."  
" Dead " clamour'd the good woman  
" hear him talk !  
I warrant, man, that we shall bring  
you round."  
" Swear " added Enoch sternly " on  
the book."  
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam  
swore.  
Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon  
her,  
" Did you know Enoch Arden of this  
town ? "  
" Know him ? " she said " I knew  
him far away.  
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the  
street ;  
Held his head high, and cared for no  
man, he."  
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd  
her ;  
" His head is low, and no man cares  
for him.  
I think I have not three days more to  
live ;  
I am the man." At which the woman  
gave  
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical  
cry.  
" You Arden, you ! nay,—sure he  
was a foot  
Higher than you be." Enoch said  
again

" My God has bow'd me down to  
what I am ;  
My grief and solitude have broken  
me ;  
Neverthelss, know you that I am he  
Who married—but that name has  
twice been changed—  
I married her who married Philip Ray.  
Sit, listen." Then he told her of his  
voyage,  
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming  
back,  
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,  
And how he kept it. As the woman  
heard,  
Fast flow'd the current of her easy  
tears,  
While in her heart she yearn'd inces-  
santly  
To rush abroad all round the little  
haven,  
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his  
woes ;  
But awed and promise-bounden she  
forbore,  
Saying only " See your bairns before  
you go !  
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and  
arose  
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch  
hung  
A moment on her words, but then  
replied.

" Woman, disturb me not now  
at the last,  
But let me hold my purpose till I die.  
Sit down again ; mark me and under-  
stand,  
While I have power to speak. I  
charge you now,  
When you shall see her, tell her that I  
died  
Blessing her, praying for her, loving  
her ;  
Save for the bar between us, loving  
her  
As when she laid her head beside my  
own.  
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I  
saw  
So like her mother, that my latest  
breath

Was spent in blessing her and praying  
for her.  
And tell my son that I died blessing  
him.  
And say to Philip that I blest him  
too;  
He never meant us any thing but  
good.  
But if my children care to see me  
dead,  
Who hardly knew me living, let them  
come,  
I am their fath'r; but she must not  
come,  
For my dead face would vex her after-  
life.  
And now there is but one of all my  
blood,  
Who will embrace me in the world-to-  
be:  
This hair is his: she cut it off and  
gave it.  
And I have borne it with me all these  
years,  
And thought to bear it with me to my  
grave;  
But now my mind is changed, for I  
shall see him,  
My babe in bliss: wherefore when I  
am gone,  
Take, give her this, for it may comfort  
her:  
It will moreover be a token to her,  
That I am he."

He ceased; and Miriam Lane  
Made such a voulble answer pro-  
mising all,  
That once again he roll'd his eyes  
upon her  
Repeating all he wish'd, and once  
again  
She promised.

Then the third night after this,  
While Enoch slumber'd motionless  
and pale,  
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at  
intervals,  
There came so loud a calling of the  
sea,  
That all the houses in the haven rang.  
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms  
abroad

Crying with a loud voice "a sail! a  
sail!"

I am saved;" and so fell back and  
spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul  
away.  
And when they buried him the little  
port  
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

### AYLMER'S FIELD

1793

DUST are our frames; and, gilded  
dust, our pride  
Looks only for a moment whole and  
sound;  
Like that long-buried body of the  
king,  
Found lying with his urns and orna-  
ments,  
Which at a touch of light, an air of  
heaven,  
Slipt into ashes and was found no  
more.

Here is a story which in rougher  
shape  
Came from a grizzled cripple, whom  
I saw  
Sunning himself in a waste field  
alone—  
Old, and a mine of memories—who  
had served,  
Long since, a bygone Rector of the  
place,  
And been himself a part of what he  
told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER that almighty  
man,  
The county God—in whose capacious  
hall,  
Hung with a hundred shields, the  
family tree  
Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate  
king—  
Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd  
the spire,  
Stood from his walls and wing'd his  
entry-gates

<p>And swang besides on many a windy sign— Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head Saw from his windows nothing save his own— What lovelier of his own had he than her, His only child, his Edith, whom he loved As heiress and not heir regrettfully ? But “ he that marries her marries her name ” This fiat somewhat soothed himself and wife, His wife a faded beauty of the Baths, Inispid as the Queen upon a card ; Her all of thought and bearing hardly more Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.</p>	<p>Have also set his many-shielded tree ? There was an Aylmer-Averill mar- riage once, When the red rose was redder than itself, And York's white rose as red as Lan- caster's, With wounded peace which each had prick'd to death. “ Not proven ” Averill said, or laugh- ingly “ Some other race of Averills ”— prov'n or no, What cared he ? what, if other or the same ? He lean'd not on his fathers but him- self. But Leolin, his brother, living oft With Averill, and a year or two before Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away By one low voice to one dear neigh- bourhood, Would often, in his walks with Edith, claim A distant kinship to the gracious blood That shook the heart of Edith hearing him.</p>
<p>A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn, Little about it stirring save a brook ! A sleepy land where under the same wheel The same old rut would deepen year by year ; Where almost all the village had one name ; Where Aylmer follow'd Aylmer at the Hall And Averill Averill at the Rectory Thrice over ; so that Rectory and Hall, Bound in an immemorial intimacy, Were open to each other ; tho' to dream That Love could bind them closer well had made The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle up With horror, worse than had he heard his priest Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men Daughters of God ; so sleepy was the land.</p>	<p>Sanguine he was : a but less vivid hue Than of that islet in the chestnut- bloom Flamed in his cheek ; and eager eyes, that still Took joyful note of all things joyful, beam'd, Beneath a manelike mass of rolling gold, Their best and brightest, when they dwelt on hers, Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else, But subject to the season or the mood, Shone like a mystic star between the less And greater glory varying to and fro, We know not wherefore ; bounteously made, And yet so finely, that a troublous touch</p>

And might not Averill, had he will'd  
it so,  
Somewhere beneath his own low range  
of roofs,

Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in  
 a day,  
 A joyous to dilate, as toward the  
 light.  
 And these had been together from the  
 first.  
 Leolin's first nurse was, five years  
 after, hers :  
 So much the boy foreran ; but when  
 his date  
 Doubled her own, for want of play-  
 mates, he  
 (Since Averill was a decad and a half  
 His elder, and their parents under-  
 ground)  
 Had tost his ball and flown his kite,  
 and roll'd  
 His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her  
 dipt  
 Against the rush of the air in the  
 prone swing,  
 Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain,  
 arranged  
 Her garden, sow'd her name and kept  
 it green  
 In living letters, told her fairy-tales,  
 Show'd her the fairy footings on the  
 grass,  
 The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,  
 The petty maretail forest, fairy  
 pines,  
 Or from the tiny pitted target blew  
 What look'd a flight of fairy arrows  
 aim'd  
 All at one mark, all hitting : make-  
 believes  
 For Edith and himself : or else he  
 forged,  
 But that was later, boyish histories  
 Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon,  
 wreck.  
 Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and  
 true love  
 Crown'd after trial ; sketches rude  
 and faint,  
 But where a passion yet unborn per-  
 haps  
 Lay hidden as the music of the moon  
 Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightin-  
 gale.  
 And thus together, save for college-  
 times  
 Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair  
 As ever painter painted, poet sang,

Or Heav'n in lavish bounty moulded,  
 grew.  
 And more and more, the maiden  
 woman-grown,  
 He wasted hours with Averill ; there,  
 when first  
 The tented winter-field was broken  
 up  
 Into that phalanx of the summer  
 spears  
 That soon should wear the garland ;  
 there again  
 When burr and bine were gather'd ;  
 lastly there  
 At Christmas ; ever welcome at the  
 Hall,  
 On whose dull sameness his full tide  
 of youth  
 Broke with a phosphorescence cheer-  
 ing even  
 My lady ; and the Baronet yet had  
 laid  
 No bar between them : dull and self-  
 involved,  
 Tall and erect, but bending from his  
 height  
 With half-allowing smiles for all the  
 world,  
 And mighty courteous in the main—  
 his pride  
 Lay deeper than to wear it as his  
 ring—  
 He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,  
 Would care no more for Leolin's  
 walking with her  
 Than for his old Newfoundland's,  
 when they ran  
 To loose him at the stables, for he  
 rose  
 Twofooted at the limit of his chain,  
 Roaring to make a third : and how  
 should Love,  
 Whom the cross-lightnings of four  
 chance-met eyes  
 Flash into fiery life from nothing,  
 follow  
 Such dear familiarities of dawn ?  
 Seldom, but when he does, Master of  
 all.  
 So these young hearts not knowing  
 that they loved,  
 Not she at least, nor conscious of a  
 bar

Between them, nor by plight or broken ring  
 Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,  
 Wander'd at will, but oft accompanied  
 By Averill : his, a brother's love, that hung  
 With wings of brooding shelter o'er her peace,  
 Might have been other, save for Leolin's—  
 Who knows ? but so they wander'd, hour by hour  
 Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd, and drank  
 The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself,  
 For out beyond her lodges, where the brook  
 Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran  
 By sallowy rims, arose the labourers' homes,  
 A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls  
 That dimpling died into each other, huts  
 At random scatter'd, each a nest in bloom.  
 Her art, her hand, her counsel all had wrought  
 About them : here was one that, summer-blanch'd,  
 Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's-joy  
 In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad ; and here  
 The warm blue breathings of a hidden hearth  
 Broke from a bower of vine and honeysuckle :  
 One look'd all rosetree, and another wore  
 A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars :  
 This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers  
 About it ; this, a milky-way on earth,  
 Like visions in the Northern dreamer's heavens,  
 A lily-avenue climbing to the doors ;  
 One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves  
 A summer burial deep in hollyhocks ;

Each, its own charm ; and Edith's everywhere ;  
 And Edith ever visitant with him, He but less loved than Edith, of her poor :  
 For she—so lowly-lovely and so loving,  
 Queenly responsive when the loyal hand  
 Rose from the clay it work'd in as she past,  
 Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,  
 Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height  
 That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice  
 Of comfort and an open hand of help,  
 A splendid presence flattering the poor rools  
 Revered as theirs, but kindlier than themselves  
 To ailing wife or wailing infancy  
 Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored ;  
 He, loved for her and for himself. A grasp  
 Having the warmth and muscle of the heart,  
 A childly way with children, and a laugh  
 Ringing like proven golden coinage true,  
 Were no false passport to that easy realm,  
 Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,  
 Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth  
 The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,  
 Heard the good mother softly whisper  
 " Bless,  
 God bless 'em : marriages are made in Heaven."

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.  
 My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced  
 With half a score of swarthy faces came.  
 His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,

Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not  
 fair;  
 Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled  
 the hour,  
 Tho' seeming boastful: so when first  
 he dash'd  
 Into the chronicle of a deedful day,  
 Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile  
 Of patron "Good! my lady's kins-  
 man! good!"  
 My lady with her fingers interlock'd,  
 And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,  
 Call'd all her vital spirits into each  
 ear  
 To listen: unawares they flitted off,  
 Busying themselves about the flower-  
 age  
 That stood from out a stiff brocade in  
 which,  
 The meteor of a splendid season, she,  
 Once with this kinsman, ah so long  
 ago,  
 Stept thro' the stately minuet of  
 those days:  
 But Edith's eager fancy hurried  
 with him  
 Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of  
 his life:  
 Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye  
 Hated him with a momentary hate.  
 Wife-hunting, as the rumour ran, was  
 he:  
 I know not, for he spoke not, only  
 shower'd  
 His oriental gifts on everyone  
 And most on Edith: like a storm he  
 came,  
 And shook the house, and like a  
 storm he went.  
 Among the gifts he left her (possibly  
 He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to  
 return  
 When others had been tested) there  
 was one,  
 A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels  
 on it  
 Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd  
 itself  
 Fine as ice-ferns on January panes  
 Made by a breath. I know not whence  
 at first,  
 Nor of what race, the work; but as he  
 told

The story, storming a hill-fort of  
 thieves  
 He got it; for their captain after  
 fight,  
 His comrades having fought their  
 last below,  
 Was climbing up the valley; at whom  
 he shot:  
 Down from the beetling crag to  
 which he clung  
 Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,  
 This dagger with him, which when  
 now admired  
 By Edith whom his pleasure was to  
 please,  
 At once the costly Sahib yielded to  
 her.  
 And Leolin, coming after he was  
 gone,  
 Tost over all her presents petulantly:  
 And when she show'd the wealthy  
 scabbard, saying  
 "Look what a lovely piece of work-  
 manship!"  
 Slight was his answer "Well—I care  
 not for it:"  
 Then playing with the blade he prick'd  
 his hand,  
 "A gracious gift to give a lady, this!"  
 "But would it be more gracious"  
 ask'd the girl  
 "Were I to give this gift of his to one  
 That is no lady?" "Gracious?  
 No" said he.  
 "Me?—but I cared not for it. O  
 pardon me,  
 I seem to be ungraciousness itself."  
 "Take it" she added sweetly "tho'  
 his gift;  
 For I am more ungracious ev'n than  
 you,  
 I care not for it either;" and he said  
 "Why then I love it." but Sir  
 Aylmer past,  
 And neither loved nor liked the thing  
 he heard.  
 The next day came a neighbour.  
 Blues and reds  
 They talk'd of: blues were sure of it,  
 he thought:  
 Then of the latest fox—where started  
 —kill'd

In such a bottom : " Peter had the brush,  
My Peter, first : " and did Sir Aylmer know  
That great pock-pitten fellow had been caught ?  
Then made his pleasure echo, hand to hand,  
And rolling as it were the substance of it  
Between his palms a moment up and down—  
" The birds were warm, the birds were warm upon him ;  
We have him now : " and had Sir Aylmer heard—  
Nay, but he must—the land was ringing of it—  
This blacksmith-border marriage—one they knew—  
Raw from the nursery—who could trust a child ?  
That cursed France with her equalities !  
And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially With nearing chair and lower'd accent) think—  
For people talk'd—that it was wholly wise  
To let that handsome fellow Averill walk  
So freely with his daughter ? people talk'd—  
The boy might get a notion into him ;  
The girl might be entangled ere she knew.  
Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening spoke :  
" The girl and boy, Sir, know their differences ! "  
" Good " said his friend " but watch ! " and he " enough,  
More than enough, Sir ! I can guard my own."  
They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the house  
Had fallen first, was Edith that same night ;  
Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a rough piece  
Of early rigid colour, under which

Withdrawing by the counter door to that  
Which Leolin open'd, she cast back upon him  
A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He, as one  
Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,  
And pelted with outrageous epithets,  
Turning beheld the Powers of the House  
On either side the hearth, indignant ; her,  
Cooling her false cheek with a feather-fan,  
Him glaring, by his own stale devil spur'd,  
And, like a beast hard-ridden, breathing hard.  
" Ungenerous, dishonourable, base,  
Presumptuous ! trusted as he was with her,  
The sole succeeder to their wealth,  
Their lands,  
The last remaining pillar of their house,  
The one transmitter of their ancient name,  
Their child." " Our child ! " " Our heiress ! " " Ours ! " for still, Like echoes from beyond a hollow, came  
Her sicklier iteration. Last he said  
" Boy, mark me ! for your fortunes are to make.  
I swear you shall not make them out of mine.  
Now inasmuch as you have practised on her,  
Perplexed her, made her half forget herself,  
Swerve from her duty to herself and us—  
Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossible,  
Far as we track ourselves—I say that this,—  
Else I withdraw favour and countenance  
From you and yours for ever—shall you do.  
Sir, when you see her—but you shall not see her—  
No, you shall write, and not to her, but me :

And you shall say that having spoken  
with me,  
And after look'd into yourself, you  
find  
That you meant nothing—as indeed  
you know  
That you meant nothing. Such a  
match as this!  
Impossible, prodigious!" These  
were words,  
As meted by his measure of himself,  
Arguing boundless forbearance: after  
which,  
And Leolin's horror-stricken answer,  
"I  
So foul a traitor to myself and her,  
Never oh never," for about as long  
As the wind-hover hangs in balance,  
paused  
Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm  
within,  
Then broke all bonds of courtesy,  
and crying  
"Boy, should I find you by my doors  
again,  
My men shall lash you from them like  
a dog;  
Hence!" with a sudden execration  
drove  
The footstool from before him, and  
arose;  
So, stammering "scoundrel" out of  
teeth that ground  
As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin  
still  
Retreated half-aghost, the fierce old  
man  
Follow'd, and under his own lintel  
stood  
Storming with lifted hands, a hoary  
face  
Meet for the reverence of the hearth,  
but now,  
Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd  
moon,  
Vext with unworthy madness, and  
deform'd.  
  
Slowly and conscious of the rageful  
eye  
That watch'd him, till he heard the  
ponderous door  
Close, crashing with long echoes thro'  
the land,

Went Leolin; then, his passions all in  
flood  
And masters of his motion, furiously  
Down thro' the bright lawns to his  
brother's ran,  
And foam'd away his heart at Averill's  
ear;  
Whom Averill solaced as he might,  
amazed:  
The man was his, had been his father's,  
friend:  
He must have seen, himself had seen  
it long;  
He must have known, himself had  
known: besides,  
He never yet had set his daughter  
forth  
Here in the woman-markets of the  
west,  
Where our Caucasians let themselves  
be sold.  
Some one, he thought, had slander'd  
Leolin to him.  
"Brother, for I have loved you more  
as son  
Than brother, let me tell you: I my-  
self—  
What is their pretty saying? jilted,  
is it?  
Jilted I was: I say it for your peace.  
Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the  
shame  
The woman should have borne, humili-  
ated,  
I lived for years a stunted sunless  
life;  
Till after our good parents past away  
Watching your growth, I seem'd  
again to grow.  
Leolin, I almost sin in envying you:  
The very whitest lamb in all my fold  
Loves you: I know her: the worst  
thought she has  
Is whiter even than her pretty hand:  
She must prove true: for, brother,  
where two fight  
The strongest wins, and truth and  
love are strength,  
And you are happy: let her parents  
be."  
  
But Leolin cried out the more upon  
them—

Insolent, brainless, heartless ! heiress,  
wealth,  
Their wealth, their heiress ! wealth  
enough was theirs  
For twenty matches. Were he lord  
of this,  
Why twenty boys and girls should  
marry on it,  
And forty blest ones bless him, and  
himself  
Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He  
believed  
This filthy marriage-hindering Mam-  
mon made  
The harlot of the cities : nature crost  
Was mother of the foul adulteries  
That saturate soul with body. Name,  
too ! name,  
Their ancient name ! they *might*  
be proud ; its worth  
Was being Edith's. Ah how pale  
she had look'd  
Darling, to-night ! they must have  
rated her  
Beyond all tolerance. These old  
pheasant-lords,  
These partridge-breeders of a thou-  
sand years,  
Who had mildew'd in their thousands,  
doing nothing  
Since Egbert—why, the greater their  
disgrace !  
Fall back upon a name ! rest, rot in  
that !  
Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler ?  
fools,  
With such a vantage-ground for  
nobleness !  
He had known a man, a quintessence  
of man,  
The life of all—who madly loved—  
and he,  
Thwarted by one of these old father-  
fools,  
Had rioted his life out, and made an  
end.  
He would not do it ! her sweet face  
and faith  
Held him from that : but he had  
powers, he knew it ;  
Back would he to his studies, make a  
name,  
Name, fortune too : the world should  
ring of him

To shame these mouldy Aylmers in  
their graves :  
Chancellor, or what is greatest would  
he be—  
“ O brother, I am grieved to learn  
your grief—  
Give me my fling, and let me say my  
say.”

At which, like one that sees his own  
excess,  
And easily forgives it as his own,  
He laugh'd ; and then was mute ;  
but presently  
Wept like a storm : and honest Averill  
seeing  
How low his brother's mood had fallen,  
fetch'd  
His richest beeswing from a binn  
reserved  
For banquets, praised the waning red,  
and told  
The vintage—when *this* Aylmer came  
of age—  
Then drank and past it ; till at length  
the two,  
Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again,  
agreed  
That much allowance must be made  
for men.  
After an angry dream this kindlier  
glow  
Faded with morning, but his purpose  
held.

Yet once by night again the lovers  
met,  
A perilous meeting under the tall  
pines  
That darken'd all the northward of her  
Hall,  
Him, to her meek and modest bosom  
prest  
In agony, she promised that no force,  
Persuasion, no, nor death could alter  
her :  
He, passionately hopefuller, would  
go,  
Labour for his own Edith, and return  
In such a sunlight of prosperity  
He should not be rejected. “ Write  
to me !  
They loved me, and because I love  
their child

They hate me : there is war between us, dear,  
 Which breaks all bonds but ours ; we must remain  
 Sacred to one another." So they talk'd,  
 Poor children, for their comfort : the wind blew :  
 The rain of heaven, and their own bitter tears,  
 Tears, and the careless rain of heaven, mixt  
 Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each other  
 In darkness, and above them roar'd the pine.

So Leolin went ; and as we task ourselves  
 To learn a language known but smatteringly  
 In phrases here and there at random, toil'd  
 Mastering the lawless science of our law,  
 That codeless myriad of precedent,  
 That wilderness of single instances,  
 Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune led,  
 May beat a pathway out to wealth and fame.  
 The jests, that flash'd about the pleader's room,  
 Fightingn of the hour, the pun, the scurrilous tale,—  
 Old scandals buried now seven decades deep  
 In other scandals that have lived and died,  
 And left the living scandal that shall die—  
 Were dead to him already ; bent as he was  
 To make disproof of scorn, and strong in hopes,  
 And prodigal of all brain-labour he,  
 Charier of sleep, and wine, and exercise,  
 Except when for a breathing-while at eve,  
 Some niggard fraction of an hour, he ran  
 Beside the river-bank : and then indeed

Harder the times were, and the hands of power  
 Were bloodier, and the according hearts of men  
 Seem'd harder too ; but the soft river-breeze,  
 Which fann'd the gardens of that rival rose  
 Yet fragrant in a heart remembering His former talks with Edith, on him breathed  
 Far purerlier in his rushings to and fro,  
 After his books, to flush his blood with air,  
 Then to his books again. My lady's cousin,  
 Half-sickening of his pension'd afternoon,  
 Drove in upon the student once or twice,  
 Ran a Malayan muck against the times,  
 Had golden hopes for France and all mankind,  
 Answer'd all queries touching those at home  
 With a heaved shoulder and a saucy smile,  
 And fain had haled him out into the world,  
 And air'd him there : his nearer friend would say  
 "Screw not the chord too sharply lest it snap."  
 Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger forth  
 From where his worldless heart had kept it warm,  
 Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.  
 And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of him  
 Approvingly, and prophesied his rise :  
 For heart, I think, help'd head : her letters too,  
 Tho' far between, and coming fitfully  
 Like broken music, written as she found  
 Or made occasion, being strictly watch'd,  
 Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till he saw  
 An end, a hope, a light breaking upon him.

But they that cast her spirit into flesh,  
 Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued themselves  
 To sell her, those good parents, for her good.  
 Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth  
 Might lie within their compass, him they lured  
 Into their net made pleasant by the baits  
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.  
 So month by month the noise about their doors,  
 And distant blaze of those dull banquets, made  
 The nightly wirer of their innocent hare  
 Falter before he took it. All in vain.  
 Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd  
 Loolin's rejected rivals from their suit  
 So often, that the folly taking wings  
 Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the wind  
 With rumour, and became in other fields  
 A mockery to the yeomen over ale,  
 And laughter to their lords: but those at home,  
 As hunters round a hunted creature draw  
 The cordon close and closer toward the death,  
 Narrow'd her goings out and comings in;  
 Forbad her first the house of Averill,  
 Then closed her access to the wealthier farms,  
 Last from her own home-circle of the poor  
 They barr'd her: yet she bore it: yet her cheek  
 Kept colour: wondrous! but, O mystery!  
 What amulet drew her down to that old oak,  
 So old, that twenty years before, a part  
 Falling had let appear the brand of John—

Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree,  
 but now  
 The broken base of a black tower, a cave  
 Of touchwood, with a single flourishing spray.  
 There the manorial lord too curiously Raking in that millennial touchwood-dust  
 Found for himself a bitter treasure-trove;  
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and read  
 Writting a letter from his child, for which  
 Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,  
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to fly,  
 But scared with threats of jail and halter gave  
 To him that flutter'd his poor parish wits  
 The letter which he brought, and swore besides  
 To play their go-between as heretofore  
 Nor let them know themselves betray'd; and then  
 Soul-stricken at their kindness to him, went  
 Hating his own lean heart and miserable.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot dream  
 The father panting woke, and oft, as dawn  
 Aroused the black republic on his elms,  
 Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue brush'd  
 Thro' the dim meadow toward his treasure-trove,  
 Seized it, took home, and to my lady,  
 —who made  
 A downward crescent of her minion mouth,  
 Listless in all despondence,—read;  
 and tore,  
 As if the living passion symbol'd there  
 Were living nerves to feel the rent;  
 and burnt,

Now chafing at his own great self  
defied,  
Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks of scorn  
In babyisms, and dear diminutives  
Scatter'd all over the vocabulary  
Of such a love as like a chidden child,  
After much wailing, hush'd itself at  
last  
Hopeless of answer : then tho' Averill  
wrote  
And bade him with good heart sustain  
himself—  
All would be well—the lover heeded  
not,  
But passionately restless came and  
went,  
And rustling once at night about the  
place,  
There by a keeper shot at, slightly  
hurt,  
Raging return'd : nor was it well for  
her  
Kept to the garden now, and grove of  
pines,  
Watch'd even there ; and one was set  
to watch  
The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd  
them all,  
Yet bitterer from his readings : once  
indeed,  
Warm'd with his wines, or taking  
pride in her,  
She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her  
tenderly  
Not knowing what possess'd him :  
that one kiss  
Was Leolin's one strong rival upon  
earth ;  
Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,  
Seem'd hope's returning rose : and  
then ensued  
A Martin's summer of his faded  
love,  
Or ordeal by kindness ; after this  
He seldom crost his child without a  
sneer ;  
The mother flow'd in shallower acrimonies :  
Never one kindly smile, one kindly  
word :  
So that the gentle creature shut from  
all  
Her charitable use, and face to face

With twenty months of silence,  
slowly lost  
Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold  
on life.  
Last, some low fever ranging round to  
spy  
The weakness of a people or a house,  
Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer,  
or men,  
Or almost all that is, hurting the  
hurt—  
Save Christ as we believe him—found  
the girl  
And flung her down upon a couch of  
fire,  
Where careless of the household faces  
near,  
And crying upon the name of Leolin,  
She, and with her the race of Aylmer,  
past.

Star to star vibrates light : may  
soul to soul  
Strike thro' a finer element of her  
own ?  
So,—from afar,—touch as at once ? or  
why  
That night, that moment, when she  
named his name,  
Did the keen shriek " yes love, yes  
Edith, yes,"  
Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers  
woke,  
And came upon him half-arisen from  
sleep,  
With a weird bright eye, sweating  
and trembling,  
His hair, as it were crackling into  
flames,  
His body half flung forward in pursuit,  
And his long arms stretch'd as to  
grasp a flyer :  
Nor knew he wherefore he had made  
the cry ;  
And being much befool'd and idiotized  
By the rough amity of the other, sank  
As into sleep again. The second day,  
My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,  
A breaker of the bitter news from  
home,  
Found a dead man, a letter edged  
with death  
Beside him, and the dagger which  
himself

Gave Edith, redd'n'd with no bani- dit's blood : " From Edith " was engraven on the blade.	Above them, with his hopes in either grave.
Then Averill went and gazed upon his death. And when he came again, his flock believed— Beholding how the years which are not Time's Had blasted him—that many thou- sand days Were clipt by horror from his term of life. Yet the sad mother, for the second death Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of the first, And being used to find her pastor texts, Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying him To speak before the people of her child, And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day rose : Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded woods Was all the life of it ; for hard on these, A breathless burden of low-folded heavens Stifled and chill'd at once : but every roof Sent out a listener : many too had known Edith among the hamlets round, and since The parents' harshness and the hap- less loves And double death were widely mur- mur'd, left Their own gray tower, or plain-faced tabernacle, To hear him ; all in mourning these, and those With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove Or kerchief ; while the church,—one night, except For greenish glimmerings thro' the lancets,—made Still paler the pale head of him, who tower'd	Long o'er his bent brows linger'd Averill, His face magnetic to the hand from which Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labour'd thro' His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse " Behold, Your house is left unto you desolate!" But lapsed into so long a pause again As half amazed half frightened all his flock : Then from his height and loneliness of grief Bore down in flood; and dash'd his angry heart Against the desolations of the world.

Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel  
 to—  
 Thy God is far diffused in noble groves  
 And princely halls, and farms, and  
 flowing lawns,  
 And heaps of living gold that daily  
 grow,  
 And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries.  
 In such a shape dost thou behold thy  
 God.  
 Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him* :  
 for thine  
 Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair  
 Ruffled upon the scarf'skin, even while  
 The deathless ruler of thy dying house  
 Is wounded to the death that cannot  
 die ; •  
 And tho' thou numberest with the  
 followers  
 Of One who cried ' leave all and  
 follow me.'  
 Thee therefore with His light about  
 thy feet,  
 Thee with His message ringing in  
 thine ears,  
 Thee shall thy brother man, the  
 Lord from Heaven,  
 Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,  
 Wonderful, Prince of peace, the  
 Mighty God,  
 Count the more base idolater of the  
 two ;  
 Crueller : as not passing thro' the fire  
 Bodies, but souls—thy children's—  
 thro' the smoke,  
 The blight of low desires—darkening  
 thine own  
 To thine own likeness ; or if one of  
 these,  
 Thy better born unhappily from thee,  
 Should, as by miracle, grow straight  
 and fair—  
 Friends, I was bid to speak of such a  
 one  
 By those who most have cause to  
 sorrow for her—  
 Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,  
 Fairer than Ruth among the fields of  
 corn,  
 Fair as the Angel that said ' hail '  
 she seem'd,  
 Who entering fill'd the house with  
 sudden light,  
 For so mine own was brighten'd :  
 where indeed  
 The roof so lowly but that beam of  
 Heaven  
 Dawn'd sometime thro' the door-  
 way ? whose the babe  
 Too ragged to be fondled on her  
 lap,  
 Warm'd at her bosom ? The poor  
 child of shame,  
 The common care whom no one cared  
 for, leapt  
 To greet her, wasting his forgotten  
 heart,  
 As with the mother he had never  
 known,  
 In gambols : for her fresh and inno-  
 cent eyes  
 Had such a star of morning in their  
 blue,  
 That all neglected places of the field  
 Broke into nature's music when they  
 saw her.  
 Low was her voice, but won mysteri-  
 ous way  
 Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder  
 one  
 Was all but silence—free of alms her  
 hand—  
 The hand that robed your cottage-  
 walls with flowers  
 Has often toil'd to clothe your little  
 ones ;  
 Has often placed upon the sick man's  
 brow  
 Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow  
 smooth !  
 Had you one sorrow and she shared it  
 not ?  
 One burthen and she would not  
 lighten it ?  
 One spiritual doubt she did not  
 soothe ?  
 Or when some heat of difference  
 sparked out,  
 How sweetly would she glide between  
 your wraths,  
 And steal you from each other ! for  
 she walk'd  
 Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of  
 love,  
 Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee !  
 And one—of him I was not bid to  
 speak—

Was always with her, whom you also knew.  
 Him too you loved, for he was worthy love.  
 And these had been together from the first ;  
 They might have been together till the last.  
 Friends, this frail bark of ours, when sorely tried,  
 May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,  
 Without the captain's knowledge : hope with me.  
 Whose shame is that, if he went hence with shame ?  
 Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these  
 I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,  
 'My house is left unto me desolate'.

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept ; but some, Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than those That knit themselves for summer shadow, scowl'd At their great lord. He, when it seem'd he saw No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but fork'd Of the near storm, and aiming at his head, Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldierlike, Erect : but when the preacher's cadence flow'd Softening thro' all the gentle attributes Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd his face, Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron mouth ; And " O pray God that he hold up " she thought " Or surely I shall shame myself, and him."

" Nor yours the blame—for who beside your hearths Can take her place—if echoing me you cry

' Our house is left unto us desolate ? ' But thou, O thou that杀est, had'st thou known, O thou that stonest, had'st thou understood The things belonging to thy peace and ours ! Is there no prophet but the voice that calls Doom upon kings, or in the waste ' Repent ' ? Is not our own child on the narrow way, Who down to those that saunter in the broad Cries ' come up hither,' as a prophet to us ? Is there no stoning save with flint and rock ? Yes, as the dead we weep for testify— No desolation but by sword and fire ? Yes, as your moanings witness, and myself Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss. Give me your prayers, for he is past your prayers, Not past the living fount of pity in Heaven. But I that thought myself long-suffering, meek, Exceeding ' poor in spirit '—how the words Have twisted back upon themselves, and mean Vileness, we are grown so proud—I wish'd my voice A rushing tempest of the wrath of God To blow these sacrifices thro' the world— Sent like the twelve-divided concubine To inflame the tribes : but there— out yonder—earth Lightens from her own central Hell— O there The red fruit of an old idolatry— The heads of chiefs and princes fall so fast, They cling together in the ghastly sack— The land all shambles—naked marriages

Flash from the bridge, and ever-  
 murder'd France,  
 By shores that darken with the gath-  
 ering wolf,  
 Runs in a river of blood to the sick  
 sea.  
 Is this a time to madden madness  
 then?  
 Was this a time for these to flaunt  
 their pride?  
 May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as  
 dense as those  
 Which hid the Holiest from the  
 people's eyes  
 Ere the great death, shroud this great  
 sin from all!  
 Doubtless our narrow world must  
 canvass it:  
 O rather pray for those and pity them,  
 Who thro' their own desire accom-  
 plish'd bring  
 Their own gray hairs with sorrow to  
 the grave—  
 Who broke the bond which they  
 desired to break,  
 Which else had link'd their race with  
 times to come—  
 Who wove coarse webs to snare her  
 purity,  
 Grossly contriving their dear daugh-  
 ter's good—  
 Poor souls, and knew not what they  
 did, but sat  
 Ignorant, devising their own daugh-  
 ter's death!  
 May not that earthly chastisement  
 suffice?  
 Have not our love and reverence left  
 them bare?  
 Will not another take their heritage?  
 Will there be children's laughter in  
 their hall  
 For ever and for ever, or one stone  
 Left on another, or is it a light thing  
 That I their guest, their host, their  
 ancient friend,  
 I made by these the last of all my  
 race  
 Must cry to these the last of theirs, as  
 cried  
 Christ ere His agony to those that  
 swore  
 Not by the temple but the gold, and  
 made

Their own traditions God, and slew  
 the Lord,  
 And left their memories a world's  
 curse—'Behold,  
 Your house is left unto you deso-  
 late?''  
 Ended he had not, but she brook'd  
 no more:  
 Long since her heart had beat re-  
 morselessly,  
 Her crampt-up sorrow pain'd her,  
 and a sense  
 Of meanness in her unresisting life.  
 Then their eyes vext her; for on  
 entering  
 He had cast the curtains of their seat  
 aside—  
 Black velvet of the costliest—she her-  
 self  
 Had seen to that: fain had she closed  
 them now,  
 Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd  
 Her husband inch by inch, but when  
 she laid,  
 Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he  
 veil'd  
 His face with the other, and at once,  
 as falls  
 A creeper when the prop is broken, fell  
 The woman shrieking at his feet,  
 and swoon'd.  
 Then her own people bore along the  
 nave  
 Her pendent hands, and narrow  
 meagre face  
 Seam'd with the shallow cares of  
 fifty years:  
 And her the Lord of all the landscape  
 round  
 Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all  
 Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd  
 out  
 Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle  
 Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded  
 ways  
 Stumbling across the market to his  
 death,  
 Unpitied; for he groped as blind, and  
 seem'd  
 Always about to fall, grasping the  
 pcws  
 And oaken finials till he touch'd the  
 door;

Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot  
stood,  
strode from the porch, tall and erect  
again.

But nevermore did either pass the  
gate  
Save under pall with bearers. In one  
month,  
Thro' weary and yet ever wearier  
hours,  
The childless mother went to seek  
her child ;  
And when he felt the silence of his  
house  
About him, and the change and not  
the change,  
And those fixt eyes of painted ances-  
tors  
Staring for ever from their gilded  
walls  
On him their last descendant, his own  
head  
Began to droop, to fall ; the man be-  
came  
Imbecile ; his one word was " deso-  
late " ;  
Dead for two years before his death  
was he ;  
But when the second Christmas came,  
escaped  
His keepers, and the silence which he  
felt,  
To find a deeper in the narrow gloom  
By wife and child ; nor wanted at his  
end  
The dark retinue reverencing death  
At golden thresholds ; nor from tender  
hearts,  
And those who sorrow'd o'er a van-  
ish'd race,  
Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.  
Then the great Hall was wholly  
broken down,  
And the broad woodland parcell'd in-  
to farms ;  
And where the two contrived their  
daughter's good,  
Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has  
made his run,  
The hedgehog underneath the plan-  
tain bores,  
The rabbit fondles his own harmless  
face.

The slow-worm creeps, and the thin  
weasel there  
Follows the mouse, and all is open  
field.

## SEA DREAMS

A cury clerk, but gently born and  
bred ;  
His wife, an unknown artist's orphan  
child—  
One babe was theirs, a Margaret,  
three years old :  
They, thinking that her clear german-  
der eye  
Droopt in the giant-factored city-  
gloom,  
Came, with a month's leave given  
them, to the sea :  
For which his gains were dock'd,  
however small :  
Small were his gains, and hard his  
work ; besides,  
Their slender household fortunes (for  
the man  
Had risk'd his little) like the little  
thrift,  
Trembled in perilous places o'er a  
deep :  
And oft, when sitting all alone, his  
face  
Would darken, as he cursed his credu-  
lousness,  
And that one unctuous mouth which  
lured him, rogue,  
To buy strange shares in some Peru-  
vian mine.  
Now seaward-bound for health they  
gain'd a coast,  
All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning  
cave,  
At close of day ; slept, woke, and went  
the next,  
The Sabbath, pious variers from the  
church,  
To chapel ; where a heated pulpiteer,  
Not preaching simple Christ to simple  
men,  
Announced the coming doom, and  
fulminated  
Against the scarlet woman and her  
creed :

For sideways up he swung his arms,  
and shriek'd  
" Thus, thus with violence," ev'n as  
if he held  
The Apocalyptic millstone, and him-  
self  
Were that great Angel ; " Thus with  
violence  
Shall Babylon be cast into the sea ;  
Then comes the close." The gentle-  
hearted wife  
Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world ;  
He at his own : but when the wordy  
storm  
Had ended, forth they came and  
paced the shore,  
Ran in and out the long sea-framing  
caves,  
Drank the large air, and saw, but  
scarce believed  
(The snowflake of so many a summer  
still  
Clung to their fancies) that they saw,  
the sea.  
So now on sand they walk'd, and now  
on cliff,  
Lingering about the thymy promon-  
tories,  
Till all the sails were darken'd in the  
west,  
And roas'd in the east : then homeward  
and to bed :  
Where she, who kept a tender Chris-  
tian hope  
Haunting a holy text, and still to that  
Returning, as the bird returns, at  
night,  
" Let not the sun go down upon your  
wrath,"  
Said, " Love, forgive him : " but he  
did not speak ;  
And silenced by that silence lay the  
wife,  
Remembering her dear Lord who died  
for all,  
And musing on the little lives of men,  
And how they mar this little by their  
feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a  
full tide  
Rose with ground-swell, which, on  
the foremost rocks

Touching, upjetted in spirits of wild  
sea-smoke,  
And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam,  
and fell  
In vast sea-cataracts—ever and  
anon  
Dead claps of thunder from within  
the cliffs  
Heard thro' the living roar. At this  
the babe,  
Their Margaret cradled near them,  
wail'd and woke  
The mother, and the father suddenly  
cried,  
" A wreck, a wreck ! " then turn'd,  
and groaning said,  
" Forgive ! How many will say,  
' forgive,' and find  
A sort of absolution in the sound  
To hate little longer ! No ; the sin  
That neither God nor man can well  
forgive,  
Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.  
Is it so true that second thoughts are  
best ?  
Not first, and third, which are a riper  
first ?  
Too ripe, too late ! they come too late  
for use.  
Ah love, there surely lives in man  
and beast  
Something divine to warn them of  
their foes :  
And such a sense, when first I fronted  
him,  
Said, ' trust him not ; ' but after,  
when I came  
To know him more, I lost it, knew him  
less ;  
Fought with what seem'd my own  
uncharity ;  
Sat at his table ; drank his costly  
wines ;  
Made more and more allowance for  
his talk ;  
Went further, fool ! and trusted him  
with all,  
All my poor scrapings from a dozen  
years  
Of dust and deskwork : there is no  
such mine,  
None ; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing  
gold,

Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea roars  
Ruin: a fearful night!"

" Not fearful; fair,"  
Said the good wife, " if every star in heaven  
Can make it fair: you do but hear the tide.  
Had you ill dreams?"

" O yes," he said, " I dream'd  
Of such a tide swelling toward the land.  
And I from out the boundless outer deep  
Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one  
Of those dark caves that run beneath the cliffs.  
I thought the motion of the boundless deep  
Bore through the cave, and I was heaved upon it  
In darkness: then I saw one lovely star  
Larger and larger. ' What a world,'  
I thought,  
' To live in!' but in moving on I found  
Only the landward exit of the cave,  
Bright with the sun upon the stream beyond:  
And near the light a giant woman sat,  
All over earthy, like a piece of earth,  
A pickaxe in her hand: then out I slept  
Into a land all sun and blossom, trees  
As high as heaven, and every bird that sings:  
And here the night-light flickering in my eyes  
Awoke me."

" That was then your dream,"  
she said,  
" Not sad, but sweet."

" So sweet, I lay," said he,  
" And mused upon it, drifting up the stream  
In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced

The broken vision; for I dream'd that still  
The motion of the great deep bore me on,  
And that the woman walk'd upon the brink:  
I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her of it:  
' It came,' she said, ' by working in the mines:'  
O then to ask her of my shares, I thought;  
And ask'd; but not a word; she shook her head.  
And then the motion of the current ceased,  
And there was rolling thunder; and we reach'd  
A mountain, like a wall of burs and thorns;  
But she with her strong feet up the steep hill  
Trod out a path: I follow'd; and at top  
She pointed seaward: there a fleet of glass,  
That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,  
Sailing along before a gloomy cloud  
That not one moment ceased to thunder, past  
In sunshine: right across its track there lay,  
Down in the water, a long reef of gold,  
Or what seem'd gold: and I was glad at first  
To think that in our often-ransack'd world  
Still so much gold was left; and then  
I fear'd  
Lest the gay navy there should splinter on it,  
And fearing waved my arm to warn them off;  
An idle signal, for the brittle fleet  
(I thought I could have died to save it) near'd,  
Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and vanish'd, and I woke  
I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see  
My dream was Life; the woman honest Work;  
And my poor venture but a fleet of glass  
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold."

" Nay," said the kindly wife to  
 comfort him,  
 " You raised your arm, you tumbled  
 down and broke  
 The glass with little Margaret's  
 medicine in it;  
 And, breaking that, you made and  
 broke your dream:  
 A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks."

" No trifle," groan'd the husband;  
 " yesterday  
 I met him suddenly in the street, and  
 ask'd  
 That which I ask'd the woman in my  
 dream.  
 Like her, he shook his head. ' Show  
 me the books !'  
 He dodged me with a long and loose  
 account.  
 ' The books, the books ! ' but he, he  
 could not wait,  
 Bound on a matter he of life and death:  
 When the great Books (see Daniel  
 seven and ten)  
 Were open'd, I should find he meant  
 me well;  
 And then began to bloat himself, and  
 ooze  
 All over with the fat affectionate smile  
 That makes the widow lean. ' My  
 dearest friend,  
 Have faith, have faith ! We live by  
 faith,' said he;  
 ' And all things work together for the  
 good  
 Of those'—it makes me sick to  
 quote him—last  
 Grip my hand hard, and with God-  
 bless-you went.  
 I stood like one that had received a  
 blow:  
 I found a hard friend in his loose  
 accounts,  
 A loose one in the hard grip of his  
 hand,  
 A curse in his God-bless-you: then  
 my eyes  
 Pursued him down the street, and far  
 away,  
 Among the honest shoulders of the  
 crowd,  
 Read rascal in the motions of his  
 back.

And scoundrel in the supple-sliding  
 knee."

" Was he so bound, poor soul ?"  
 said the good wife;  
 " So are we all: but do not call him,  
 love,  
 Before you prove him, rogue, and  
 proved, forgive.  
 His gain is loss; for he that wrongs  
 his friend  
 Wrongs himself more, and ever bears  
 about  
 A silent court of justice in his breast,  
 Himself the judge an' jury, and him-  
 self  
 The prisoner at the bar, ever con-  
 demn'd:  
 And that drags down his life: then  
 comes what comes  
 Hereafter: and he meant, he said he  
 meant,  
 Perhaps he meant, or partly meant,  
 you well."

" With all his conscience and one  
 eye askew"—  
 Love, let me quote these lines, that  
 you may learn  
 A man is likewise counsel for himself,  
 Too often, in that silent court of  
 yours—  
 ' With all his conscience and one eye  
 askew,  
 So false, he partly took himself for  
 true;  
 Whose pious talk, when most his  
 heart was dry,  
 Made wet the crafty crowfoot round  
 his eye;  
 Who, never naming God except for  
 gain,  
 So never took that useful name in  
 vain;  
 Made Him his catspaw and the Cross  
 his tool,  
 And Christ the bait to trap his dupe  
 and fool;  
 Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace  
 he forged,  
 And snakelike slimed his victim ere  
 he gorged;  
 And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the  
 rest

Arising, did his holy oily best,  
Dropping the too rough H in Hell  
and Heaven,  
To spread the Word by which himself  
had thriven.  
How like you this old satire ? "

" Nay," she said,  
" I loathe it : he had never kindly  
heart,  
Nor ever cared to better his own  
kind,  
Who first wrote satire, with no pity  
in it.  
But will you hear *my* dream, for I had  
one  
That altogether went to music ? Still  
It awed me."

Then she told it, having dream'd  
Of that same coast.

—But round the North, a light,  
A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapour,  
lay,  
And ever in it a low musical note  
Swell'd up and died ; and, as it  
swell'd, a ridge  
Of breaker issued from the belt, and  
still  
Grew with the growing note, and  
when the note  
Had reach'd a thunderous fullness,  
on those cliffs  
Broke, mixt with awful light (the  
same as that  
Living within the belt) whereby she  
saw  
That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs  
no more,  
But huge cathedral fronts of every  
age,  
Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye  
could see,  
One after one : and then the great  
ridge drew,  
Lessening to the lessening music,  
back,  
And past into the belt and swell'd  
again  
Slowly to music : ever when it  
broke  
The statues, king or saint, or founder  
fell ;

Then from the gaps and chasms of  
ruin left  
Came men and women in dark  
clusters round,  
Some crying, " Set them up ! they  
shall not fall ! "  
And others " Let them lie, for they  
have fall'n."  
And still they strove and wrangled :  
and she grieved  
In her strange dream, she knew not  
why, to find  
Their wildest wailings never out of  
tune  
With that sweet note ; and ever as  
their shrieks  
Ran highest up the gamut, that  
great wave  
Returning, while none mark'd it,  
on the crowd  
Broke, mixt with awful light, and  
show'd their eyes  
Glaring, and passionate looks, and  
swept away  
The men of flesh and blood, and men  
of stone,  
To the waste deeps together.

" Then I fixt  
My wistful eyes on two fair images,  
Both crown'd with stars and high  
among the stars,—  
The Virgin Mother standing with her  
child  
High up on one of those dark min-  
ster-fronts—  
Till she began to totter, and the child  
Clung to the mother, and sent out a  
cry  
Which mixt with little Margaret's,  
and I woke,  
And my dream awed me :—well—  
but what are dreams ?  
Yours came but from the breaking  
of a glass,  
And mine but from the crying of a  
child."

" Child ? No ! " said he, " but  
this tide's roar, and his,  
Our Boanerges with his threats of  
doom,  
And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms  
(Altho' I grant but little music there)

Went both to make your dream : but  
if there were  
A music harmonizing our wild cries,  
Sphere-music such as that you dream'd  
about,  
Why, that would make our passions  
far too like  
The discords dear to the musician.  
No—  
One shriek of hate would jar all the  
hymns of heaven :  
True Devils with no ear, they howl in  
tune  
With nothing but the Devil ! "

" 'True' indeed !  
One of our town, but later by an  
hour  
Here than ourselves, spoke with me  
on the shore ;  
While you were running down the  
sands, and made  
The dimpled flounce of the sea-  
furbelow flap,  
Good man, to please the child. She  
brought strange news.  
Why were you silent when I spoke  
to-night ?  
I had set my heart on your forgiving  
him  
Before you knew. We *must* forgive  
the dead."

" Dead ! who is dead ? "

" The man your eye pursued.  
A little after you had parted with  
him,  
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-  
disease."

" Dead ? he ? of heart-disease ?  
what heart had he  
To die of ? dead ! "

" Ah, dearest, if there be  
A devil in man, there is an angel too,  
And if he did that wrong you charge  
him with,  
His angel broke his heart. But your  
rough voice  
(You spoke so loud) has roused the  
child again.

Sleep, little birdie, sleep ! will she not  
sleep  
Without her ' little birdie ? ' well  
then, sleep,  
And I will sing you ' birdie.' "

Saying this,  
The woman half turn'd round from  
him she loved,  
Left him one hand, and reaching  
thro' the night  
Her other, found (for it was close  
beside)  
And half embraced the basket cradle-  
head  
With one soft arm, which, like the  
pliant bough  
That moving moves the nest and  
nestling, sway'd  
The cradle, while she sang this baby  
song. '

What does little birdie say  
In her nest at peep of day ?  
Let me fly, says little birdie,  
Mother, let me fly away.  
Birdie, rest a little longer,  
Till the little wings are stronger.  
So she rests a little longer,  
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,  
In her bed at peep of day ?  
Baby says, like little birdie,  
Let me rise and fly away.  
Baby, sleep a little longer,  
Till the little limbs are stronger.  
If she sleeps a little longer,  
Baby too shall fly away.

" She sleeps : let us too, let all evil,  
sleep.  
He also sleeps—another sleep than  
ours.  
He can do no more wrong : forgive  
him, dear,  
And I shall sleep the sounder ! "

Then the man,  
" His deeds yet live, the worst is yet  
to come.  
Yet let your sleep for this one night  
be sound :  
I 'do forgive him ! "

"Thanks, my love," she said,  
"Your own will be the sweeter," and  
they slept.

## THE GRANDMOTHER

## I

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone,  
you say, little Anne?  
Ruddy and white, and strong on his  
legs, he looks like a man.  
And Willy's wife has written: she  
never was otherwise,  
Never the wife for Willy: he  
wouldn't take my advice.

## II

For, Annie, you see, her father was  
not the man to save,  
Hadn't a head to manage, and drank  
himself into his grave.  
Pretty enough, very pretty! but I  
was against it for one.  
Eh!—but he wouldn't hear me—and  
Willy, you say, is gone.

## III

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born,  
the flower of the flock;  
Never a man could fling him: for  
Willy stood like a rock.  
"Here's a leg for a babe of a week!"  
says doctor; and he would be  
bound.  
There was not his like that year in  
twenty parishes round.

## IV

Strong of his hands, and strong on  
his legs, but still of his tongue!  
I ought to have gone before him:  
I wonder he went so young.  
I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have  
not long to stay;  
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner,  
for he lived far away.

## V

Why do you look at me, Annie?  
you think I am hard and cold;

But all my children have gone before  
me, I am so old:  
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I  
weep for the rest;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have  
wept with the best.

## VI

For I remember a quarrel I had with  
your father, my dear,  
All for a slanderous story, that cost  
me many a tear.  
I mean your grandfather, Annie:  
it cost me a world of woe,  
Seventy years ago, my darling,  
seventy years ago.

## VII

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to  
the place, and I knew right well  
That Jenny had tript in her time:  
I knew, but I would not tell.  
And she to be coming and slandering  
me, the base little liar!  
But the tongue is a fire as you know,  
my dear, the tongue is a fire.

## VIII

And the parson made it his text that  
week, and he said likewise,  
That a lie which is half a truth is  
ever the blackest of lies,  
That a lie which is all a lie may be  
met and fought with outright,  
But a lie which is part a truth is a  
harder matter to fight.

## IX

And Willy had not been down to the  
farm for a week and a day;  
And all things look'd half-dead, tho'  
it was the middle of May.  
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what  
Jenny had been!  
But soiling another, Annie, will never  
make oneself clean.

## X

And I cried myself well-nigh blind,  
and all of an evening late

I climb'd to the top of the garth,  
and stood by the road at the  
gate.

The moon like a rick on fire was rising  
over the dale,  
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush  
beside me chirrup the nightin-  
gale.

## xi

All of a sudden he stopt: there past  
by the gate of the farm,  
Willy,—he didn't see me,—and  
Jenny hung on his arm.  
Out into the road I started, and spoke  
I scarce knew how;  
Ah, there's no fool like the old one—  
it makes me angry now.

## xii

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd  
the thing that he meant;  
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking  
courtesy and went.  
And I said, "Let us part: in a  
hundred years it'll all be the  
same,  
You cannot love me at all, if you love  
not my good name."

## xiii

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all  
wet, in the sweet moonshine:  
" Sweetheart, I love you so well that  
your good name is mine.  
And what do I care for Jane, let her  
speak of you well or ill;  
But marry me out of hand: we two  
shall be happy still."

## xiv

" Marry you, Willy! " said I, " but  
I needs must speak my mind,  
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be  
jealous and hard and unkind."  
But he turn'd and claspt me in his  
arms, and answer'd, " No, love,  
no;"  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy  
years ago.

## xv

So Willy and I were wedded: I  
wore a lilac gown;  
And the ringers rang with a will,  
and he gave the ringers a crown.  
But the first that ever I bare was  
dead before he was born,  
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie,  
flower and thorn.

## xvi

That was the first time, too, that ever  
I thought of death.  
There lay the sweet little body that  
never had drawn a breath,  
I had not wept, little Anne, not since  
I had been a wife;  
But I wept like a child that day, for  
the babe had fought for his life.

## xvii

His dear little face was troubled, as  
if with anger or pain:  
I look'd at the still little body—his  
trouble had all been in vain.  
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see  
him another morn:  
But I wept like a child for the child  
that was dead before he was  
born.

## xviii

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for  
he seldom said me nay:  
Kind, like a man, was he; like a  
man, too, would have his way:  
Never jealous—not he: we had many  
a happy year;  
And he died, and I could not weep—  
my own time seem'd so near.

## xix

But I wish'd it had been God's will  
that I, too, then could have  
died:  
I began to be tired a little, and fain  
had slept at his side.  
And that was ten years back, or  
more, if I don't forget:  
But as to the children, Annie, they're  
all about me yet.

## xx

Pattering over the boards, my Annie  
who left me at two,  
Patter she goes, my own little Annie,  
an Annie like you :  
Pattering over the boards, she comes  
and goes at her will,  
While Harry is in the five-acre and  
Charlie ploughing the hill.

## xxi

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them  
too—they sing to their team :  
Often they come to the door in a  
pleasant kind of a dream.  
They come and sit by my chair, they  
hover about my bed—  
I am not always certain if they be  
alive or dead.

## xxii

And yet I know for a truth, there's  
none of them left alive ;  
For Harry went at sixty, your father  
at sixty-five :  
And Willy, my eldest born, at nigh  
threescore and ten ;  
I knew them all as babies, and now  
they're elderly men.

## xxiii

For mine is a time of peace, it is not  
often I grieve ;  
I am oftener sitting at home in my  
father's farm at eve :  
And the neighbours come and laugh  
and gossip, and so do I ;  
I find myself often laughing at things  
that have long gone by.

## xxiv

To be sure the preacher says, our  
sins should make us sad :  
But mine is a time of peace, and there  
is Grace to be had ;  
And God, not man, is the Judge of us  
all when life shall cease ;  
And in this Book, little Annie, the  
message is one of Peace.

## xxv

And age is a time of peace, so it be  
free from pain,  
And happy has been my life ; but I  
would not live it again.  
I seem to be tired a little, that's all,  
and long for rest ;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could  
have wept with the best.

## xxvi

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my  
eldest-born, my flower ;  
But how can I weep for Willy, he  
has but gone for an hour,—  
Gone for a minute, my son, from this  
room into the next ;  
I, too, shall go in a minute. What  
time have I to be vexed ?

## xxvii

And Willy's wife has written, she  
never was otherwise.  
Get me my glasses, Annie : thank God  
that I keep my eyes.  
There is but a trifle left you, when  
I shall have past away.  
But stay with the old woman now :  
you cannot have long to stay.

## NORTHERN FARMER

## OLD STYLE

## i

WHEER 'asta beān saw long and meā  
lippin' 'ere aloān ?  
Noorse ? thoort nowt o' a noorse :  
whoy, Doctor's beān an' agoān :  
Says that I moānt'a naw moor yaāle :  
but I beānt a fool :  
Git ma my yaāle, for I beānt a-gooin'  
to breāk my rule.

## ii

Doctors, they knaws nowt, for a  
says what's nawways true :  
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saāy the  
things that a do.

I've 'ed my point o' yaäle ivry noight  
sin' I beän 'ere,  
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-  
noight for foorty year.

## III

Parson's a beän loikewoise, an' a  
sittin 'ere o' my bed.  
"The Amoightly's a taäkin o' you to  
'issén, my friend," a said,  
An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe  
were due, an' I gied it in hond ;  
I done my duty by un, as I a' done  
by the lond.

## IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'an-  
not sa mooch to larn.  
But a cost oop, thot a did, 'boot  
Bessy Marris's barn.  
Thof a knaws I hallus voäted wi'  
Squierre an' choorch an' staäte,  
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver  
agin the raäte.

## V

An' I hallus comed to 'a choorch afoor  
moy Sally wur dead,  
An' 'eerd un a burmin' awaäy loike  
a buzzard-clock<sup>1</sup> ower my yeäd,  
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd  
but I thowt a 'ad summut to  
saäy.  
An I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a  
said an' I comed awaäy.

## VI

Bessy Marris's barn ! tha knaws she  
laäid it to meä.  
Mowt 'a beän, mayhap, for she wur  
a bad un, sheä.  
'Siver, I kep un, I kep un, my lass,  
tha mun understand ;  
I done my duty by un as I a' done by  
the lond.

## VII

But Parson a comes an' a goos, an'  
a says it eäsy an freeä

<sup>1</sup> Cockchafer.

"The Amoightly's a taäkin' o' you to  
'issén, my friend," says eä.  
I weänt saäy men be loiars, thof  
summun said it in 'ääste ;  
But a reäds woon sarmin weedäk, an'  
I 'a stubb'd Thornaby waäste.

## VIII

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass ?  
naw, naw, tha was not born  
then ;  
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eerd  
un mysen ;  
Moäst loike a butter-bump,<sup>2</sup> for I  
'eerd un aabout an' aboot,  
But I stubb'd un oop wi' the lot, an'  
raäved an remblied un oot.

## IX

Keäper's it wur ; fo' they fun un  
theer a-laäid on 'is faäce  
Doon i' the wold 'enemies<sup>3</sup> afoor I  
comed to the plaäce.  
Noäks or Thimbleby—toner 'ed shot  
un as deäd as a naäil.  
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize  
—but git ma my yaäle.

## X

Dubbut looäk at the waäste : theer  
warn't not feäd for a cow :  
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an'  
locäk at it now—  
Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now  
theer's lots o' feäd,  
Fourscore yows upon it an' some on  
it doon in seäd.

## XI

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd  
to 'a stubb'd it at fall,  
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd  
plow thruff it an' all,  
If godamoightly an' parson 'ud nob-  
but let ma alocä,  
Meä, wi' haäte condered haäcre o'  
Squierre's, an lond o' my oän.

## XII

Do godamoightly knaw what a's doing  
a-taäkin' o' meä ?

<sup>2</sup> Bittern.

<sup>3</sup> Anemones.

I beānt wonn as saws 'ere a beān an'  
yonder a peā!  
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all—  
a' dear a' dear!  
And I 'a monaged for Squoire come  
Michaelmas thirty year.

## xiii

A mowt 'a taäken Joänes, as 'ant a  
'äpoth o' sense,  
Or a mowt 'a taäken Robins—a niver  
mended a fence:  
But godamoighty a moost taäke meä  
an' taäke ma now  
Wi 'auf the cows to cauve an'  
Thornaby holms to plow!

## xiv

Looäk 'ow quoloty smoiles when they  
sees ma a passin' by,  
Says to thessén naw doot " what a  
mon a beä sewer-ly ! "  
For they knows what I beän to  
Squire sin fust a comed to the  
'All ;  
I done my duty by Squoire an' I  
done my duty by all.

## xv

Squire's in Lunnon, an' summun  
I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,  
For who's to howd the lond ater meä  
thot muddles ma quoit;  
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weant niver  
give it to Joänes,  
Norther a moänt to Robins—a niver  
rembles the stoäns.

## xvi

But summun 'll come ator meä may-  
hap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm  
Huzzin' an' maäzin the blessed feälds  
wi' the Divil's oän team.  
Gin I mun doy I mun doy, an' loife  
they says is sweet,  
But gin I mun doy I mun doy, for I  
couldn abear to see it.

## xvii

What atta stannin' theer for, an'  
doesn bring ma the yaäle ?

Doctor's a 'tottler, lass, an a's hallus  
'i' the owd taäle ;  
I weant breäk rules for Doctor, a  
knaws naw moor nor a floy ;  
Git ma my yaäle I tell tha, an' gin I  
mun doy I mun doy.

## TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay  
and fall,  
The vapours weep their burthen to  
the ground,  
Man comes and tills the field and  
lies beneath,  
And after many a summer dies the  
swan.  
Me only cruel immortality  
Consumes : I wither slowly in thine  
arms,  
Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like  
a dream  
The ever silent spaces of the East,  
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls  
of morn.

Alas ! for this gray shadow, once a  
man—  
So glorious in his beauty and thy  
choice,  
Who madest him thy chosen, that  
he seem'd  
To his great heart none other than a  
God !  
I ask'd thee, " Give me immortality."  
Then didst thou grant mine asking  
with a smile,  
Like wealthy men who care not how  
they give.  
But thy strong Hours indignant  
work'd their wills,  
And beat me down and marr'd and  
wasted me,  
And tho' they could not end me, left  
me maim'd  
To dwell in presence of immortal  
youth,  
Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends. tho'  
even now,

Close over us, the silver star, thy  
guide,  
Shines in those tremulous eyes that  
fill with tears  
To hear me? Let me go: take back  
thy gift:  
Why should a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of men,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
Where all should pause, as is most  
meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart;  
there comes  
A glimpse of that dark world where I  
was born.  
Once more the old mysterious glim-  
mer steals  
From thy pure brows, and from thy  
shoulders pure,  
And bosom beating with a heart  
renew'd.  
Thy cheek begins to redden thro'  
the gloom,  
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close  
to mine,  
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the  
wild team  
Which love thee, yearning for thy  
yoke, arise,  
And shake the darkness from their  
loosen'd manes,  
And beat the twilight into flakes of  
fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beauti-  
ful  
In silence, then before thine answer  
given  
Departest, and thy tears are on my  
cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with  
thy tears,  
And make me tremble lest a saying  
learnt,  
In days far-off, on that dark earth,  
be true?  
"The Gods themselves cannot recall  
their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another  
heart  
In days far-off, and with what other  
eyes  
I used to watch—if I be he that  
watch'd—  
The lucid outline forming round  
thee; saw  
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;  
Changed with thy mystic change, and  
felt my blood  
Glow with the glow that slowly  
crimson'd all  
Thy presence and thy portals, while  
I lay,  
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing  
dewy-warm  
With kisses balmier than half-open-  
ing buds  
Of April, and could hear the lips  
that kiss'd  
Whispering I knew not what of  
wild and sweet,  
Like that strange song I heard Apollo  
sing,  
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine  
East:  
How can my nature longer mix with  
thine?  
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me,  
cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my  
wrinkled feet  
Upon thy glimmering thresholds,  
when the steam  
Floats up from those dim fields about  
the homes  
Of happy men that have the power to  
die,  
And grassy barrows of the happier  
dead.  
Release me, and restore me to the  
ground;  
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see  
my grave:  
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by  
morn;  
I earth in earth forget these empty  
courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver  
wheels.

## THE VOYAGE

I

We left behind the painted buoy  
That tosses at the harbour-mouth ;  
And madly danced our hearts with  
joy,

As fast we fleeted to the South :  
How fresh was every sight and sound  
On open main or winding shore !  
We knew the merry world was round,  
And we might sail for evermore.

II

Warm broke the breeze against the  
brow,  
Dry sang the tackle, sang the  
sail :  
The Lady's-head upon the prow  
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd  
the gale,  
The broad seas swell'd to meet the  
keel,  
And swept behind : so quick the  
run,  
We felt the good ship shake and  
reel,  
We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

III

How oft we saw the Sun retire,  
And burn the threshold of the  
night,  
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
And sleep beneath his pillar'd  
light !  
How oft the purple-skirted robe  
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
As thro' the slumber of the globe  
Again we dash'd into the dawn !

IV

New stars all night above the brim  
Of waters lighten'd into view ;  
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
Changed every moment as we flew.  
Far ran the naked moon across  
The houseless ocean's heaving field,  
Or flying shone, the silver boss  
Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

V

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
High towns on hills were dimly  
seen,  
We past long lines of Northern capes  
And dewy Northern meadows  
green.  
We came to warmer waves, and deep  
Across the boundless east we  
drove,  
Where those long swells of breaker  
sweep  
The nutmeg rocks and isles of  
clove.

VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
Gloom'd the low coast and quiver-  
ing brine  
With ashy rains, that spreading made  
Fantastic plume or sable pine ;  
By sands and steaming flats, and  
floods  
Of mighty mouth, we scudded  
fast,  
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
How swiftly stream'd ye by the  
bark !  
At times the whole sea burn'd, at  
times  
With wakes of fire we tore the  
dark ;  
At times a carven craft would shoot  
From havens hid in fairy bowers,  
With naked limbs and flowers and  
fruit,  
But we nor paused for fruit nor  
flowers.

VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled  
Down the waste waters day and  
night,  
And still we follow'd where she led,  
In hope to gain upon her flight.  
Her face was evermore unseen,  
And fixt upon the far sea-line ;

But each man murmur'd "O my Queen,  
I follow till I make thee mine."

## IX

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
Like Fancy made of golden air,  
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,  
Now high on waves that idly burst  
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd  
the sea,  
And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
She bore the blade of Liberty.

## X

And only one among us—him  
We pleased not—he was seldom pleased :  
He saw not far : his eyes were dim :  
But ours he swore were all diseased.  
"A ship of fools" he shrieked in spite,  
"A ship of fools" he sneer'd and wept.  
And overboard one stormy night  
He cast his body, and on we swept.

## XI

And never sail of ours was furl'd,  
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;  
We loved the glories of the world,  
But laws of nature were our scorn ;  
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,  
But whence were those that drove the sail  
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,  
And to and thro' the counter-gale ?

## XII

Again to colder climes we came,  
For still we follow'd where she led :  
Now mate is blind and captain lame,  
And half the crew are sick or dead.  
But blind or lame or sick or sound  
We follow that which flies before :  
We know the merry world is round,  
And we may sail for evermore.

## IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest white,  
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,  
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,  
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.  
All along the valley while I walk'd to-day,  
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away ;  
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed  
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,  
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,  
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

## THE FLOWER

ONCE in a golden hour  
I cast to earth a seed.  
Up there came a flower,  
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went  
Thro' my garden-bower,  
And muttering discontent  
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall  
It wore a crown of light,  
But thieves from o'er the wall  
Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide  
By every town and tower,  
Till all the people cried  
"Splendid is the flower."

Read my little fable :  
He that runs may read.  
Most can raise the flowers now,  
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,  
And some are poor indeed ;  
And now again the people  
Call it but a weed.

## REQUIESCAT

FAIR is her cottage in its place,  
Where you broad water sweetly  
slowly glides.  
It sees itself from thatch to base  
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to  
die!  
Her quiet dream of life this hour  
may cease.  
Her peaceful being slowly passes by  
To some more perfect peace.

## THE SAILOR BOY

He rose at dawn and, fired with hope,  
Shot o'er the seething harbour-bar,  
And reach'd the ship and caught the  
rope,

And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and  
loud

He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,  
"O boy, tho' thou art young and  
proud,

I see the place where thou wilt  
lie.

" The sands and yeasty surges mix  
In caves about the dreary bay,  
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,  
And in thy heart the scrawl shall  
play."

" Fool," he answer'd, " death is sure  
To those that stay and those that  
roam,

But I will nevermore endure  
To sit with empty hands at home.

" My mother clings about my neck,  
My sisters crying ' stay for shame; '  
My father raves of death and wreck,  
They are all to blame, they are all  
to blame.

" God help me! save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea,  
A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me."

## THE ISLET

" WHITHER O whither love shall we  
go,  
For a score of sweet little summers or  
so?"

The sweet little wife of the singer said,  
On the day that follow'd the day she  
was wed,

" Whither O whither love shall we  
go?"

And the singer shaking his curly head  
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys  
There at his right with a sudden crash,  
Singing, " and shall it be over the seas  
With a crew that is neither rude nor  
rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,  
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,  
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,  
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I  
know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;  
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,  
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,  
Fairly-delicate palaces shine  
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,  
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd  
With many a rivulet high against the  
Sun

The facets of the glorious mountain  
flash

Above the valleys of palm and pine."

" Thither O thither, love, let us go,"

" No, no, no!  
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,  
There is but one bird with a musical  
throat,  
And his compass is but of a single note,  
That it makes one weary to hear."

" Mock me not! mock me not!  
love, let us go."

" No, love, no.  
For the bud ever breaks into bloom  
on the tree,  
And a storm never wakes on the lonely  
sea,

And a worm is there in the lonely  
wood,  
That pierces the liver and blackens  
the blood,  
And makes it a sorrow to be."

## THE RINGLET

I

"Your ringlets, your ringlets,  
That look so golden-gay,  
If you will give me one, but one,  
To kiss it night and day,  
Then never chilling touch of Time  
Will turn it silver-gray;  
And then shall I know it is all true  
gold  
To flame and sparkle and stream as  
of old,  
Till all the comets in heaven are cold,  
And all her stars decay."  
"Then take it, love, and put it by;  
This cannot change, nor yet can I."

II

"My ringlet, my ringlet,  
That art so golden-gay,  
Now never chilling touch of Time  
Can turn thee silver-gray;  
And a lad may wink, and a girl may  
hint,  
And a fool may say his say;  
For my doubts and fears were all  
amiss,  
And I swear henceforth by this and  
this,  
That a doubt will only come for a kiss,  
And a fear to be kiss'd away."  
"Then kiss it, love, and put it by;  
If this can change, why so can I."

II

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I kiss'd you night and day,  
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
You still are golden-gay,  
But Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
You should be silver-gray;  
For what is this which now I'm told,  
I that took you for true gold,  
She that gave you's bought and sold,  
Sold, sold.

II

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She blush'd a rosy red,  
When Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She clipt you from her head,  
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She gave you me, and said,

"Come, kiss it, love, and put it by:  
If this can change, why so can I."  
O fie, you golden nothing, fie  
You golden lie.

III

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I count you much to blame,  
For Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
You put me much to shame,  
So Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I doom you to the flame,  
For what is this which now I learn,  
Has given all my faith a turn?  
Burn, you glossy heretic, burn,  
Burn, burn.

## A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

March 7, 1863.

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the  
sea,  
Alexandra!  
Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
But all of us Danes in our welcome  
of thee,

Alexandra!  
Welcome her, thunders of fort and of  
fleet!

Welcome her, thundering cheer of  
the street!

Welcome her, all things youthful and  
sweet,

Scatter the blossom under her feet!  
Break, happy land, into earlier  
flowers!

Make music, O bird, in the new-  
budded bowers!

Blazon your mottos of blessing and  
prayer!

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is  
ours!

Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!  
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and  
towers!

Flames, on the windy headland flare!  
Utter your jubilce, steeple and spire!  
Clash, ye bells, in the merry March  
air!

Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!  
Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and  
higher!

Melt into stars for the land's desire !  
 Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,  
 Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the  
 strand,  
 Roar as the sea when he welcomes the  
 land,  
 And welcome her, welcome the land's  
 desire,  
 The sea-kings' daughter as happy as  
 fair,  
 Blissful bride of a blissful heir,  
 Bride of the heir of the kings of the  
 sea—  
 O joy to the people and joy to the  
 throne,  
 Come to us, love us and make us your  
 own :  
 For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,  
 Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,  
 We are each all Dane in our welcome  
 of thec,

Alexandra !

## A DEDICATION

DEAR, near and true—no truer Time  
 himself

Can prove you, tho' he make you  
 evermore  
 Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life  
 Shoots to the fall—take this and  
 pray that he,  
 Who wrote it, honouring your sweet  
 faith in him,  
 May trust himself ; and spite of  
 praise and scorn,  
 As one who feels the immeasurable  
 world,  
 Attain the wise indifference of the  
 wise ;  
 And after Autumn past—if left to  
 pass  
 His autumn into seeming-leafless  
 days—  
 Draw toward the long frost and  
 longest night,  
 Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the  
 fruit  
 Which in our winter woodland looks a  
 flower.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus europaeus*).

## EXPERIMENTS

## BOÄDICEA

WHILE about the shore of Mona  
 those Neronian legionaries  
 Burnt and broke the grove and altar  
 of the Druid and Druidess,  
 Far in the East Boädicéa, standing  
 loftily charioted,  
 Mad and maddening all that heard  
 her in her fierce volubility,  
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near  
 the colony Cámulodúnæ,  
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her  
 daughters o'er a wild confed-  
 eracy.

" They that scorn the tribes and  
 call us Britain's barbarous popu-  
 laces,  
 Did they hear me, would they listen,  
 did they pity me supplicating ?  
 Shall I heed them in their anguish ?  
 shall I brook to be supplicated ?  
 Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear  
 Coritanian, Trinobant !

Must their ever-ravening eagle's  
 beak and talon annihilate us ?  
 Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave  
 it gorily quivering ?  
 Bark an answer, Britain's raven !  
 bark and blacken innumerable,  
 Blacken round the Roman carrion,  
 make the carcase a skeleton,  
 Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin,  
 from the wilderness, wallow in it,  
 Till the face of Bel be brighten'd  
 Taranis be propitiated.  
 Lo their colony half-defended ! lo  
 their colony, Cámulodúnæ !  
 There the horde of Roman robbers  
 mock at a barbarous adversary.  
 There the hive of Roman liars wor-  
 ship a glutinous emperor-idiot,  
 Such is Rome, and this her deity :  
 hear it, Spirit of Cássivéláin !  
 " Hear it, Gods ! the Gods have  
 heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian !  
 Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd,  
 Catieuchlanian, Trinobant.

These have told us all their anger  
in miraculous utterances,  
Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a  
murmur heard aërially,  
Phantom sound of blows descending,  
moan of an enemy massacred,  
Phantom wail of women and children,  
multitudinous agonies.  
Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling  
phantom bodies of horses and  
men;  
Then a phantom colony smoulder'd  
on the refuent estuary;  
Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly  
giddily tottering—  
There was one who watch'd and  
told me—down their statue of  
Victory fell.  
Lo their precious Roman banthng, lo  
the colony Cámulodúne,  
Shall we teach it a Roman lesson?  
shall we care to be pitiful?  
Shall we deal with it as an infant?  
shall we dandle it amorousl?

“ Hear Iconian, Catieuchlanian,  
hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
While I roved about the forest, long  
and bitterly meditating,  
There I heard them in the darkness,  
at the mystical ceremony,  
Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang  
the terrible prophetesses.  
‘ Fear not, isle of blowing woodland,  
isle of silvery parapots!  
Tho’ the Roman eagle shadow thee,  
tho’ the gathering enemy narrow  
thee,  
Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle,  
thou shalt be the mighty one  
yet!  
Thine the liberty, thine the glory,  
thine the deeds to be celebrated,  
Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light  
and shadow illimitable,  
Thine the lands of lasting summer,  
many-blossoming Paradises,  
Thine the North and thine the South  
and thine the battle-thunder of  
God.’  
So they chanted: how shall Britain  
light upon auguries happier?  
So they chanted in the darkness, and  
there cometh a victory now.

“ Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian,  
hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
Me the wife of rich Prasutagus, me  
the lover of liberty,  
Me they seized and me they tortured,  
me they lash'd and humiliated,  
Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine  
of rufian violators!  
See they sit, they hide their faces,  
miserable in ignominy!  
Wherefore in me burns an anger,  
not by blood to be satiated.  
Lo the palaces and the temple, lo  
the colony Cámulodúne!  
There they ruled, and thence they  
wasted all the flourishing terri-  
tory,  
Thither at their will they haled the  
yellow-ringleted Britoness—  
Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe,  
unexhausted, inexorable.  
Shout Icenian, Catieuchlanian, shout  
Coritanian, Trinobant,  
Till the victim hear within and yearn  
to hurry precipitously  
Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind,  
like the smoke in a hurricane  
whirl'd.  
Lo the colony, there they rioted in the  
city of Cánobeline!  
There they drank in cups of emerald,  
there at tables of ebony lay,  
Rolling on their purple couches in  
their tender effeminacy.  
There they dwelt and there they  
rioted; there—there—they dwell  
no more.  
Burst the gates, and burn the palaces,  
break the works of the statuary,  
Take the hoary Roman head and  
shatter it, hold it abominable,  
Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his  
lust and voluptuousness,  
Lash the maiden into swooning, me  
they lash'd and humiliated,  
Chop the breasts from off the mother,  
dash the brains of the little onc  
out,  
Up my Britons, on my chariot, on  
my chargers, trample them under  
us.”

So the Queen Boädicéa, standing  
loftily charioted,

Brandishing in her hand a dart and  
rolling glances lioness-like,  
Yell'd and shrieked between her  
daughters in her fierce volubility.  
Till her people all around the royal  
chariot agitated,  
Madly dash'd the darts together,  
writhing barbarous lineaments,  
Made the noise of frosty woodlands,  
when they shiver in January,  
Roar'd as when the rolling breakers  
boom and blanch on the precipices,  
Yell'd as when the winds of winter  
tear an oak on a promontory.  
So the silent colony hearing her  
tumultuous adversaries  
Clash the darts and on the buckler  
beat with rapid unanimous  
hand,  
Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all  
her pitiless avarice,  
Till she felt the heart within her fall  
and flutter tremulously,  
Then her pulses at the clamouring of  
her enemy fainted away.  
Out of evil evil flourishes, out of  
tyranny tyranny buds.  
Ran the land with Roman slaughter,  
multitudinous agonies.  
Perish'd many a maid and matron,  
many a valourous legionary.  
Fell the colony, city, and citadel,  
London, Verulam, Cámulodúnæ.

Rings to the roar of an angel  
onset—  
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,  
And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
Where some resplendent sunset of  
India  
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean  
isle,  
And crimson-hued the stately palmwoods  
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

*Hendecasyllabics*

## IN QUANTITY

## MILTON

## Alcaics

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of har-  
monies,  
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eter-  
nity,  
God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
Milton, a name to resound for  
ages;  
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous  
armouries,  
Tower, as the deep-domed emp-  
rén

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,  
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
Look, I come to the test, a tiny  
poem  
All composed in a metre of Catullus,  
All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
Like the skater on ice that hardly  
bears him,  
Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
Waking laughter in indolent review-  
ers.  
Should I flounder awhile without a  
tumble  
Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
They should speak to me not without  
a welcome,  
All that chorus of indolent reviewers.  
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to  
tumble,  
So fantastical is the dainty metre.  
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor  
believe me  
Too presumptuous, indolent review-  
ers.  
O blatant Magazines, regard me  
rather—  
Since I blush to belaud myself a  
moment—  
As some rare little rose, a piece of  
inmost  
Horticultural art, or half coquette-  
like  
Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE  
ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE

So Hector said, and sca-like roar'd  
his host;  
Then loosed their sweating horses  
from the yoke,  
And each beside his chariot bound his  
own;  
And oxen from the city, and goodly  
sheep  
In haste they drove, and honey-  
hearted wine  
And bread from out the houses  
brought, and heap'd  
Their firewood, and the winds from  
off the plain  
Roll'd the rich vapour far into the  
heaven.  
And these all night upon the  
bridge<sup>1</sup> of war  
Sat glorying; many a fire before  
them blazed:  
As when in heaven the stars about  
the moon

<sup>1</sup> Or, ridge

Look beautiful, when all the winds  
are laid,  
And every height comes out, and  
jutting peak  
And valley, and the immeasurable  
heavens  
Break open to their highest, and all  
the stars  
Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in  
his heart;  
So many a fire between the ships  
and stream  
Of Xanthus blazed before the towers  
of Troy,  
A thousand on the plain; and close by  
each  
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire:  
And champing golden grain, the  
horses stood  
Hard by their chariots, waiting for  
the dawn.<sup>2</sup>

*Iliad 8. 542-561.*

<sup>2</sup> Or more literally—  
And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds  
Stood by their cars, waiting the throned morn.

## MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

### TIMBUCTOO

Deep in that lion-haunted inland lies  
A mystick city, goal of high emprise.

CHAPMAN.

I STOOD upon the Mountain which  
o'erlooks  
The narrow seas, whose rapid interval  
Parts Afric from green Europe, when  
    the Sun  
Had fall'n below th' Atlantick, and  
    above  
The silent Heavens were blench'd  
    with faery light,  
Uncertain whether faery light or  
    cloud,  
Flowing Southward, and the chasms  
    of deep, deep blue  
Slumber'd unfathomable, and the  
    stars  
Were flooded over with clear glory  
    and pale.  
I gaz'd upon the sheeny coast beyond,  
There where the Giant of old Time  
    infixed  
The limits of his prowess, pillars high  
Long time eras'd from Earth: even  
    as the Sea  
When weary of wild inroad buildeth  
    up  
Huge mounds whereby to stay his  
    yeasty waves.  
And much I mus'd on legends quaint  
    and old  
Which whilome won the hearts of all  
    on Earth  
Toward their brightness, ev'n as  
    flame draws air;  
But had their being in the heart of  
    Man  
As air is th' life of flame: and thou  
    wert then  
A center'd glory-circled Memory,  
Divinest Atalantis, whom the waves  
Have buried deep, and thou of later  
    name

Imperial Eldorado roof'd with gold:  
Shadows to which, despite all shocks  
    of Change,  
All on-set of capricious Accident,  
Men clung with yearning Hope which  
    would not die.  
As when in some great City where the  
    walls  
Shake, and the streets with ghastly  
    faces throng'd  
Do utter forth a subterranean voice,  
Among the inner columns far retir'd  
At midnight, in the lone Acropolis,  
Before the awful Genius of the  
    place  
Kneels the pale Priestess in deep  
    faith, the while  
Above her head the weak lamp dips  
    and winks  
Unto the fearful summoning without:  
Nathless she ever clasps the marble  
    knees,  
Bathes the cold hand with tears, and  
    gazeth on  
Those eyes which wear no light but  
    that wherewith  
Her phantasy informs them.

Where are ye  
Thrones of the Western wave, fair  
    Islands green?  
Where are your moonlight halls, your  
    cedarn glooms,  
The blossoming abysses of your hills?  
Your flowering Capes, and your gold-  
    sanded bays  
Blown round with happy airs of  
    odorous winds?  
Where are the infinite ways, which,  
    Seraph-trod,  
Wound thro' your great Elysian  
    solitudes,  
Whose lowest deeps were, as with  
    visible love,

Fill'd with Divine effulgence, circumfus'd,  
 Flowing between the clear and polish'd stems,  
 And ever circling round their emerald cones  
 In coronals and glories, such as gird  
 The unadying foreheads of the Saints  
 in Heaven ?  
 For nothing visible, they say, had  
 birth  
 In that blest ground but it was play'd  
 about  
 With it's peculiar glory. Then I  
 rais'd  
 My voice and cried, "Wide Afric,  
 doth thy Sun  
 Lighten, thy hills enfold a City as  
 fair  
 As those which starr'd the night o'  
 the elder World ?  
 Or is the rumour of thy Timbuctoo  
 A dream as frail as those of ancient  
 Time ? "

A curve of whitening, flashing,  
 ebbing light !  
 A rustling of white wings ! the  
 bright descent  
 Of a young Seraph ! and he stood  
 besido me  
 There on the ridge, and look'd into  
 my face  
 With his unutterable, shining orbs.  
 So that with hasty motion I did veil  
 My vision with both hands, and saw  
 before me  
 Such colour'd spots as dance athwart  
 the eyes  
 Of those, that gaze upon the noonday  
 Sun.  
 Girt with a Zone of flashing gold  
 beneath  
 His breast, and compass'd round  
 about his brow  
 With triple arch of ever-changing  
 bows,  
 And circled with the glory of living  
 light  
 And alternation of all hues, he stood.

"O child of man, why muse you  
 here alone

Upon the Mountain, on the dreams  
 of old  
 Which fill'd the Earth with passing  
 loveliness,  
 Which flung strange music on the  
 howling winds,  
 And odours rapt from remote Para-  
 dise ?  
 Thy sense is clogg'd with dull mor-  
 tality,  
 Thy spirit fetter'd with the bond of  
 clay :  
 Open thine eyes and see."

I look'd, but not  
 Upon his face, for it was wonderful  
 With it's exceeding brightness, and  
 the light  
 Of the great Angel Mind which look'd  
 from out  
 The starry glowing of his restless  
 eyes.  
 I felt my soul grow mighty, and my  
 Spirit  
 With supernatural excitation bound  
 Within me, and my mental eye grew  
 large  
 With such a vast circumference of  
 thought,  
 That in my vanity I seem'd to stand  
 Upon the outward verge and bound  
 alone  
 Of full beatitude. Each failing sense  
 As with a momentary flash of light  
 Grew thrillingly distinct and keen.  
 I saw  
 The smallest grain that dappled the  
 dark Earth,  
 The indistinctest atom in deep air,  
 The Moon's white cities, and the  
 opal width  
 Of her small glowing lakes, her silver  
 heights  
 Unvisited with dew of vagrant cloud,  
 And the unsounded, undescended  
 depth  
 Of her black hollows. The clear  
 Galaxy  
 Shorn of it's hoary lustre, wonderful,  
 Distinct and vivid with sharp points  
 of light,  
 Blaze within blaze, an unimagin'd  
 depth  
 And harmony of planet-girded Suns

And moon-encircled planets, wheel in wheel.	With it's past clearness, yet it seems to me
Arch'd the wan Sapphire. Nay— the hum of men,	As even then the torrent of quick thought
Or other things talking in unknown tongues,	Absorbed me from the nature of itself
And notes of busy life in distant worlds	With it's own fleetness. Where is he that borne
Beat like a far wave on my anxious ear,	Adown the sloping of an arrowy stream,
A maze of piercing, trackless, thrilling thoughts, Involving and embracing each with each, Rapid as fire, inextricably link'd, Expanding momently with every sight	Could link his shallop to the fleeting edge, And muse midway with philosophic calm Upon the wondrous laws, which regulate The fierceness of the bounding Element ?
And sound which struck the palpitat- ing sense, The issue of strong impulse, hurried through The riv'n rapt brain; as when in some large lake From pressure of descendant crags, which lapse Disjoined, crumbling from their parent slope At slender interval, the level calm Is ridg'd with restless and increasing spheres Which break upon each other, each th' effect Of separate impulse, but more fleet and strong Than it's precursor, till the eye in vain Amid the wild unrest of swimming shade Dappled with hollow and alternate rise Of interpenetrated arc, would scan Definite round.	My thoughts which long have grovell'd in the slime Of this dull world, like dusky worms which house Beneath unshaken waters, but at once Upon some Earth-awakening day of Spring Do pass from gloom to glory, and aloft Winnow the purple, bearing on both sides Double display of starlit wings which burn, Fanlike and fibred, with intensest bloom; Ev'n so my thoughts, ewehile so low, now felt Unutterable buoyancy and strength To bear them upward through the trackless fields Of undefin'd existence far and free.
I know not if I shape These things with accurate similitude From visible objects, for but dimly now, Less vivid than a half-forgotten dream, The memory of that mental excellence Comes o'er me, and it may be I entwine The indecision of my present mind	Then first within the South me- thought I saw A wilderness of spires, and chrystral pile Of rampart upon rampart, dome on dome, Illiimitable range of battlement On battlement, and the Imperial height Of Canopy o'ercanopied. Behind In diamond light upsprung the dazzling cones

Of Pyramids as far surpassing  
Earth's  
As Heaven than Earth is fairer.  
Each aloft  
Upon his narrow'd Eminence bore  
globes  
Of wheeling Suns, or Stars, or  
semblances  
Of either, showering circular abyss  
Of radiance. But the glory of the  
place  
Stood out a pillar'd front of burnish'd  
gold,  
Interminably high, if gold it were,  
Or metal more ethereal, and beneath  
Two doors of blinding brilliance,  
where no gaze  
Might rest, stood open, and the eye  
could scan,  
Through length of porch and valve  
and boundless hall,  
Part of a throne of fiery flame,  
wherefrom  
The snowy skirting of a garment  
hung,  
And glimpse of multitudes of multi-  
tudes  
That minister'd around it—if I saw  
These things distinctly, for my  
human brain  
Stagger'd beneath the vision, and  
thick night  
Came down upon my eyelids, and I  
fell.

With ministering hand he raised  
me up:  
Then with a mournful and ineffable  
smile,  
Which but to look on for a moment  
fill'd  
My eyes with irresistible sweet tears,  
In accents of majestic melody,  
Like a swoln river's gushings in still  
night  
Mingled with floating music, thus he  
spake :

“ There is no mightier Spirit than  
I to sway  
The heart of man : and teach him to  
attain  
By shadowing forth the Unattainable ;

And step by step to scale that mighty  
stair  
Whose landing-place is wrapt about  
with clouds  
Of glory of Heaven.<sup>1</sup> With earliest  
light of Spring,  
And in the glow of sallow Summer-  
tide,  
And in red Autumn when the winds  
are wild  
With gambols, and when full-voiced  
Winter roofs  
The headland with inviolate white  
snow,  
I play about his heart a thousand  
ways,  
Visit his eyes with visions, and his  
ears  
With harmonies of wind and wave  
and wood,  
—Of winds which tell of waters,  
and of waters  
Betraying the close kisses of the  
wind—  
And win him unto me: and few there  
be  
So gross of heart who have not felt  
and known  
A higher than they see: They with  
dim eyes  
Behold me darkling. Lo ! I have  
given *thee*  
To understand my presence, and to  
feel  
My fullness; I have filled thy lips  
with power.  
I have rais'd thee higher to the  
spheres of Heaven  
Man's first, last home: and thou  
with ravish'd sense  
Listeneſt the lordly music flowing  
from  
Th' illimitable years. I am the  
Spirit,  
The permeating life which courseth  
through  
All th' intricate and labyrinthine  
veins  
Of the great vine of *Fable*, which  
outspread  
With growth of shadowing leaf and  
clusters rare,

<sup>1</sup> Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven  
is perfect.

Reacheth to every corner under Heaven,  
 Deep-rooted in the living soil of truth :  
 So that men's hopes and fears take refuge in  
 The fragrance of it's complicated glooms,  
 And cool impleached twilights. Child of Man,  
 See'st thou yon river, whose translucent wave,  
 Forth issuing from the darkness, windeth through  
 The argent streets o' th' City, imaging The soft inversion of her tremulous Domes,  
 Her gardens frequent with the stately Palm,  
 Her Pagods hung with music of sweet bells,  
 Her obelisks of ranged Chrysolite, Minarets and towers ? Lo ! how he passeth by,  
 And gulphs himself in sands, as not enduring  
 To carry through the world those waves, which bore  
 The reflex of my City in their depths. Oh City ! oh latest Throne ! where I was rais'd  
 To be a mystery of loveliness  
 Unto all eyes, the time is well-nigh come  
 When I must render up this glorious home  
 To keen *Discovery* : soon yon brilliant towers  
 Shall darken with the waving of her wand ;  
 Darken, and shrink and shiver into huts,  
 Black specks amid a waste of dreary sand,  
 Low-built, mud-wall'd, Barbarian settlements.  
 How chang'd from this fair City ! "

Thus far the Spirit :  
 Then parted Heaven-ward on the wing : and I  
 Was left alone on Calpe, and the Moon  
 Had fallen from the night, and all was dark !

1829.

## THE SKIPPING-ROPE

SURE never yet was Antelope Could skip so lightly by.  
 Stand off, or else my skipping-rope Will hit you in the eye.  
 How lightly whirls the skipping-rope ! How fairy-like you fly !  
 Go, get you gone, you muse and mope—  
 I hate that silly sigh.  
 Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,  
 Or tell me how to die.  
 There, take it, take my skipping-rope,  
 And hang yourself thereby.

Poems, 1842.

## AFTER-THOUGHT

AH, God ! the petty fools of rhyme,  
 That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars  
 Before the stony face of Time,  
 And look'd at by the silent stars ;—  
  
 That hate each other for a song,  
 And do their little best to bite,  
 That pinch their brothers in the throng,  
 And scratch the very dead for spite,—  
  
 And strain to make an inch of room  
 For their sweet selves, and cannot hear  
 The sullen Lethe rolling doom  
 On them and theirs, and all things here ;  
  
 When one small touch of Charity  
 Could lift them nearer Godlike State,  
 Than if the crowded Orb should cry  
 Like those that cried Diana great ;  
  
 And I too talk, and lose the touch  
 I talk of. Surely, after all,  
 The noblest answer unto such  
 Is kindly silence when they brawl.

Punch, March 7, 1846.

ALCIBIADES.

## THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY, 1852.

My Lords, we heard you speak: you told us all  
That England's honest censure went too far;  
That our free press should cease to brawl,  
Not sting the fiery Frenchman into war.  
It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,  
To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing, into words.

We love not this French God, the child of Hell,  
Wild War, who breaks the converse of the wise;  
But though we love kind Peace so well,  
We dare not ev'n by silence sanction lies.  
It might be safe our censures to withdraw;  
And yet, my Lords, not well: there is a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak free,  
Tho' all the storm of Europe on us break;  
No little German state are we,  
But the one voice in Europe: we must speak;  
That if to-night our greatness were struck dead,  
There might be left some record of the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be bold.  
Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant o'er,  
Better the waste Atlantic roll'd  
On her and us and our's for evermore.  
What I have we fought for Freedom for our prime,  
At last to dodge and palter with a public crime?

Shall we fear him? our own we never fear'd.  
From our first Charles by force we wrung our claims,  
Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,  
We flung the burthen of the second James.  
I say, we never fear'd! and as for these,  
We broke them on the land, we drove them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the people muse  
In doubt if you be of our Barons' breed—  
Were those your sires who fought at Lewes?  
Is this the manly strain of Runnymede?  
O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,  
Would kisp in honey'd whispers of this monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here were sin,  
Not our's the fault if we have feeble hosts—  
If easy patrons of their kin  
Have left the last free race with naked coasts!  
They knew the precious things they had to guard:  
For us, we will not spare the tyrant one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester may bawl,  
What England was, shall her true sons forget?  
We are not cotton-spinners all,  
But some love England and her honour yet.  
And these in our Thermopylae shall stand,  
And hold against the world this honour of the land.

TWO STANZAS ADDED TO  
THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

God bless our Prince and Bride !  
God keep their lands allied,  
God Save the Queen !  
Clothe them with righteousness,  
Crown them with happiness,  
Them with all blessings bless,  
God save the Queen !

Fair fall this halow'd hour,  
Farewell our England's flower,  
God save the Queen !  
Farewell, fair rose of May !  
Let both the people say,  
God bless the marriage day,  
God bless the Queen !

*Times, January, 26, 1858.*

## THE WAR.

THERE is a sound of thunder afar  
Storm in the South that darkens  
the day,  
Storm of battle and thunder of war,  
Well, if it do not roll our way,  
Storm ! Storm ! Riflemen form !  
Ready, be ready to meet the  
storm !  
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen  
form !

Be not deaf to the sound that warns !  
Be not gull'd by a despot's plea !  
Are figs of thistles, or grapes of  
thorns ?  
How should a despot set men free ?  
Form ! form ! Riflemen form !  
Ready, be ready to meet the  
storm !  
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen  
form !

Let your Reforms for a moment go,  
Look to your butts and take your  
aims.  
Better a rotten borough or so,  
Than a rotten fleet or a city in  
flames !  
Form ! form ! Riflemen form !  
Ready, be ready to meet the  
storm !

Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen  
form !

Form, be ready to do or die !  
Form in Freedom's name and the  
Queen's !  
True, that we have a faithful ally,  
But only the Devil knows what he  
means.  
Form ! form ! Riflemen form !  
Ready, be ready to meet the  
storm !  
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen  
form !

*Times, May 9, 1859.*

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
EXHIBITION, 1862.

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and  
sweet,  
In this wide hall with earth's in-  
vention stor'd,  
And praise th' invisible universal  
Lord,  
Who lets once more in peace the  
nations meet,  
Where, Science, Art, and Labour  
have outpour'd  
Their myriad horns of plenty at our  
feet.

O silent father of our Kings to be,  
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,  
For this, for all, we weep our thanks  
to thee !

The world-compelling plan was  
thine,  
And, lo ! the long laborious miles  
Of Palace ; lo ! the giant aisles,  
Rich in model and design ;  
Harvest-tool and husbandry,  
Loom, and wheel, and engin'ry,  
Secrets of the sullen mine,  
Steel and gold, and corn and wine,  
Fabric rough, or Fairyfine,  
Sunny tokens of the Line,  
Polar marvels, and a feast  
Of wonder, out of West and East,

And shapes and hues of Art divine !  
 All of beauty, all of use  
 That one fair planet can produce,  
 Brought from under every star,  
 Blown from over every main,  
 And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,  
 The works of peace with works  
 of war.

War himself must make alliance  
 With rough Labour and fine  
 Science,  
 Else he would but strike in vain.

And is the goal so far away ?  
 Far, how far, no tongue can say :  
 Let us have our dream to-day.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise  
 who reign,  
 From growing Commerce loose her  
 latest chain,  
 And let the fair, white-winged peace-  
 maker fly  
 To happy havens under all the sky,  
 And mix the seasons and the golden  
 hours,  
 Till each man find his own in all  
 men's good,  
 And all men work in noble brother-  
 hood,  
 Breaking their mailed fleets and  
 armed towers,  
 And ruling by obeying nature's  
 powers,  
 And gathering all the fruits of Peace  
 and crown'd with all her flowers.

*Fraser's Magazine, June, 1862.*

#### ATTEMPTS AT CLASSIC METRES IN QUANTITY

##### TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

###### *Hexameters and Pentameters*

THESE lame hexameters the strong-  
 wing'd music of Homer !  
 No—but a most burlesque barbar-  
 ous experiment.  
 When was a harsher sound ever heard,  
 ye Muses, in England ?

When did a frog coarser croak  
 upon our Helicon ?  
 Hexameters no worse than daring  
 Germany gave us,  
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous  
 hexameters !

*Cornhill Magazine, December, 1863.*

#### LINES FOR THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE DUCHESS OF KENT AT FROGMORE

LONG as the heart beats life within  
 her breast,  
 Thy child will bless thee, guar-  
 dian, mother mild,  
 And far away thy memory will be  
 blest,  
 By children of the children of thy  
 child.

*Court Journal, March 19, 1864.*

#### ON A MOURNER

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
 Imitates God, and turns her face  
 To every land beneath the skies,  
 Counts nothing that she meets  
 with base,  
 But lives and loves in every place ;

#### II

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,  
 And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
 Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
 The swamp, where hums the  
 dropping snipe,  
 With moss and braided marish-  
 pipe ;

#### III

And on thy heart a finger lays,  
 Saying, "beat quicker, for the  
 time  
 Is pleasant, and the woods and ways  
 Are pleasant, and the beech and  
 lime  
 Put forth and feel a gladder  
 clime."

## IV

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
Going before to some far shrine,  
Teach that sick heart the stronger  
choice,  
Till all thy life one way incline  
With one wide will that closes  
thine.

## V

And when the zoning eve has died  
Where yon dark valleys wind  
forlorn,  
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and  
bride,  
From out the borders of the morn,  
With that fair child betwixt them  
born.

## VI

And when no mortal motion jars  
The blackness round the tombing  
sod,  
Thro' silence and the trembling stars  
Comes Faith from tracts no feet  
have trod,  
And virtue, like a household god

## VII

Promising empire; such as those  
That once at dead of night did  
greet  
Troy's wandering prince, so that he  
rose  
With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

## SONG

HOME they brought him slain with  
spears.  
They brought him home at even-  
fall:  
All alone she sits and hears  
Echoes in his empty hall,  
Sounding on the morrow.  
The Sun peep'd in from open field,  
The boy began to leap and prance,  
Rode upon his father's lance,  
Beat upon his father's shield—  
"O hush, my joy, my sorrow."

THREE SONNETS TO A  
COQUETTE

## I

CARESS'D or chidden by the dainty  
hand,  
And singing airy trifles this or that,  
Light Hope at Beauty's call would  
perch and stand,  
And run thro' every change of  
sharp and flat;  
And Fancy came and at her pillow  
sat,  
When sleep had bound her in his rosy  
band,  
And chased away the still-recurring  
gnat,  
And awoke her with a lay from fairy  
land.  
But now they live with Beauty less  
and less,  
For Hope is other Hope and wan-  
ders far,  
Nor cares to lisp in love's de-  
licious creeds;  
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,  
Poor Fancy sadder than a single  
star,  
That sets at twilight in a land  
of reeds.

## II

The form, the form alone is eloquent!  
A nobler yearning never broke  
her rest  
Than but to dance and sing, be  
gaily dressed,  
And win all eyes with all accomplish-  
ment:  
Yet in the waltzing-circle as we went,  
My fancy made me for a moment  
blest  
To find my heart so near the beau-  
tiful breast  
That once had power to rob it of  
content,  
A moment came the tenderness of  
tears,  
The phantom of a wish that once  
could move,  
A ghost of passion that no smiles  
restore—

For ah ! the slight coquette,  
she cannot love,  
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand  
years,  
She still would take the praise, and  
care no more.

## III

Wan Sculptor weapest thou to take  
the cast  
Of those dead lineaments that near  
thee lie ?  
O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for  
the past,  
In painting some dead friend from  
memory ?  
Weep on : beyond his object Love  
can last :  
His object lives : more cause to  
weep have I :  
My tears, no tears of love, are flowing  
fast,  
No tears of love, but tears that  
Love can die.  
I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,  
Nor care to sit beside her where she  
sits—  
Ah pity—hint it not in human  
tones,  
But breathe it into earth and  
close it up  
With secret death for ever, in the  
pits  
Which some green Christmas  
crams with weary bones.

## THE CAPTAIN

## A LEGEND OF THE NAVY

He that only rules by terror  
Doeth grievous wrong.  
Deep as Hell I count his error.  
Let him hear my song.  
Brave the Captain was : the seamen  
Made a gallant crew,  
Gallant sons of English freemen,  
Sailors bold and true.  
But they hated his oppression,  
Stern he was and rash ;

So for every light transgression  
Doom'd them to the lash.  
Day by day more harsh and cruel  
Seem'd the Captain's mood.  
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel  
Burnt in each man's blood.  
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,  
Hoped to make the name  
Of his vessel great in story,  
Wheresoe'er he came.  
So they past by capes and islands,  
Many a harbour-mouth,  
Sailing under palmy highlands  
Far within the South,  
On a day when they were going  
O'er the lone expanse,  
In the north, her canvas flowing,  
Rose a ship of France.  
Then the Captain's colour heighten'd,  
Joyful came his speech :  
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd  
In the eyes of each.  
"Chase," he said : the ship flew  
forward,  
And the wind did blow ;  
Stately, lightly, went she Norward,  
Till she near'd the foe.  
Then they look'd at him they hated,  
Had what they desired :  
Mute with folded arms they waited—  
Not a gun was fired.  
But they heard the foeman's thunder  
Roaring out their doom ;  
All the air was torn in sunder,  
Crashing went the boom,  
Spars were splinter'd, decks were  
shatter'd,  
Bullets fell like rain ;  
Over mast and deck were scatter'd  
Blood and brains of men.  
Spars were splinter'd ; decks were  
broken ;  
Every mother's son—  
Down they dropt—no word was  
spoken—  
Each beside his gun.  
On the decks as they were lying,  
Were their faces grim.  
In their blood, as they lay dying,  
Did they smile on him.  
Those, in whom he had reliance  
For his noble name,  
With one smile of still defiance  
Sold him unto shame.

Shame and wrath his heart con-  
founded,  
Palo he turn'd and red,  
Till himself was deadly wounded  
Falling on the dead.  
Dismal error ! fearful slaughter !  
Years have wander'd by,  
Side by side beneath the water  
Crew and Captain lie ;  
There the sunlit ocean tosses  
O'er them mouldering,  
And the lonely seabird crosses  
With one waft of the wing.

My life is full of weary days,  
But good things have not kept  
aloof,  
Nor wandered into other ways :  
I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,  
Nor golden largess of thy praise.  
And now shake hands across the  
brink  
Of that deep grave to which I  
go :  
Shake hands once more : I cannot sink  
So far—far down, but I shall know  
Thy voice, and answer from below.

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,  
Had one fair daughter, and none  
other child ;  
And she was fairest of all flesh on  
earth,  
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur  
came  
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging  
war  
Each upon other, wasted all the land ;  
And still from time to time the  
heathen host  
Swarm'd overseas, and harried what  
was left.  
And so there grew great tracts of  
wilderness,  
Wherein the beast was ever more and  
more,  
But man was less and less, till Arthur  
came.  
For first Aurelius lived and fought  
and died,  
And after him King Uther fought and  
died,  
But either fail'd to make the kingdom  
one.  
And after these King Arthur for a  
space,  
And thro' the puissance of his Table  
Round,  
Drew all their petty princedoms  
under him,  
Their king and head, and made a  
realm, and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard  
was waste,  
Thick with wet woods, and many a  
beast therein,  
And none or few to scare or chase  
the beast ;

So that wild dog, and wolf and boar  
and bear  
Came night and day, and rooted in  
the fields,  
And wallow'd in the gardens of the  
king.  
And ever and anon the wolf would  
steal  
The children and devour, but now  
and then,  
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her  
fierce teat  
To human sucklings ; and the chil-  
dren, housed  
In her foul den, there at their meat  
would growl,  
And mock their foster-mother on  
four feet,  
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to  
wolf-like men,  
Worse than the wolves. And King  
Leodogran  
Groan'd for the Roman legions here  
again,  
And Caesar's eagle : then his brother  
king,  
Rience, assail'd him : last a heathen  
horde,  
Reddening the sun with smoke and  
earth with blood,  
And on the spike that split the  
mother's heart  
Spitting the child, brake on him, till,  
amazed,  
He knew not whither he should turn  
for aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly  
crown'd,  
Tho' not without an uproar made by  
those  
Who cried, " He is not Uther's son " —the king

Sent to him, saying, " Arise, and help us thou !  
For here between the man and beast we die."

And Arthur yet had done no deed of arms,  
But heard the call, and came ; and Guinevere  
Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass ;  
But since he neither wore on helm or shield  
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,  
But rode a simple knight among his knights,  
And many of these in richer arms than he,  
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,  
One among many, tho' his face was bare.  
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,  
Felt the light of her eyes into his life  
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and pitch'd  
His tents beside the forest. And he dravo  
The heathen, and he slew the beast, and fell'd  
The forest, and let in the sun, and made  
Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight ;  
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,  
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts  
Of those great Lords and Barons of his realm  
Flash'd forth and into war : for most of these  
Made head against him, crying, " Who is he  
That he should rule us ? who hath proven him  
King Uther's son ? for lo ! we look at him,  
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor voice,  
Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.

T.P.W.

This is the son of Gorlois, not the king ;  
This is the son of Anton, not the king."

And Arthur, passing thence to battle, felt  
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,  
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere ;  
And thinking as he rode, " Her father said  
That there between the man and beast they die,  
Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts  
Up to my throne, and side by side with me ?  
What happiness to reign a lonely king,  
Vext—O ye stars that shudder over me,  
O earth that soundest hollow under me,  
Vext with waste dreams ? for saving I be join'd  
To her that is the fairest under heaven,  
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,  
And cannot will my will, nor work my work  
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own realm  
Victor and lord. But were I join'd with her, [life,  
Then might we live together as one  
And reigning with one will in everything  
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,  
And power on this dead world to make it live."

And Arthur from the field of battle sent  
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
His now-made knights, to King Leodogran,  
Saying, " If I in ought have served thee well,  
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife."

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Whom when he heard, Leodogran  
in heart  
Debating—" How should I that am  
a king,  
However much he help me at my  
need,  
Give my one daughter saving to a  
king,  
And a king's son"—lifted his voice,  
and call'd  
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to  
whom  
He trusted all things, and of him  
required  
His counsel : " Knowest thou aught  
of Arthur's birth ? "

Then spake the hoary chamberlain  
and said,  
" Sir king, there be but two old men  
that know :  
And each is twice as old as I ; and  
one  
Is Morlin, the wise man that ever  
served  
King Uther thro' his magic art ; and  
one  
Is Merlin's master (so they call him)  
Bleys,  
Who taught him magic ; but the  
scholar ran  
Before the master, and so far, that  
Bleys  
Laid magic by, and sat him down,  
and wrote  
All things and whatsover Merlin did  
In one great annal-book, whereafter  
years  
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's  
birth."

To whom the King Leodogran  
replied,  
" O friend, had I been holpen half as  
well  
By this King Arthur as by thee to-  
day,  
Then beast and man had had their  
share of me :  
But summon here before us yet once  
more  
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere."  
Then, when they came before him,  
the king said,

" I have seen the cuckoo chased by  
lesser fowl,  
And reason in the chase : but where-  
fore now  
Do these your lords stir up the heat  
of war,  
Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,  
Others of Anton ? Tell me, ye your-  
selves,  
Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's  
son ? "

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd,  
" Ay."  
Then Bedivere, the first of all his  
knights  
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,  
spake—  
For bold in heart and act and word  
was he,  
Whenever slander breathed against  
the king—  
" Sir, there be many rumours on  
this head :  
For there be those who hate him in  
their hearts,  
Call him baseborn, and since his ways  
are sweet,  
And theirs are bestial, hold him less  
than man :  
And there be those who deem him  
more than man,  
And dream he dropt from heaven :  
but my belief  
In all this matter—so ye care to  
learn—  
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's  
time  
The prince and warrior Gorlois, he  
that held  
Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,  
Was wedded with a winsome wife,  
Ygerne :  
And daughters had she borne him,—  
one whereof  
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,  
Bellicent,  
Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved  
To Arthur,—but a son she had not  
borne.  
And Uther cast upon her eyes of love :  
But she, a stainless wife of Gorlois,  
So loathed the bright dishonour of his  
love,

That Gorlois and King Uther went to war :  
 And overthrown was Gorlois and slain. Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged  
 Ygerno within Tintagul, where her men,  
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their walls,  
 Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,  
 And there was none to call to but himself.  
 So, compass'd by the power of the king,  
 Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,  
 And with a shameful swiftness : afterward,  
 Not many moons, King Uther died himself,  
 Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule [wrack.  
 After him, lest the realm should go to And that same night, the night of the new year,  
 By reason of the bitterness and grief That vex'd his mother, all before his time  
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born  
 Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate To Merlin, to be holden far apart Until his hour should come ; because the lords  
 Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,  
 Wild beasts, and surely would have torn the child  
 Piecemeal among them, had they known ; for each But sought to rule for his own self and hand,  
 And many hated Uther for the sake Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took the child,  
 And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight  
 And ancient friend of Uther ; and his wife  
 Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him with her own ; And no man knew. And ever since the lords

I have foughten like wild beasts among themselves,  
 So that the realm has gone to wrack : but now,  
 This year, when Merlin (for his hour had come)  
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the hall,  
 Proclaiming, 'Here is Uther's heir, your king,'  
 A hundred voices cried, ' Away with him !  
 No king of ours ! a son of Gorlois he, Or else the child of Anton, and no king,  
 Or else baseborn.' Yet Merlin thro' his craft,  
 And while the people clamour'd for a king,  
 Had Arthur crown'd ; but after, the great lords  
 Banded, and so brake out in open war.'

Then while the king debated with himself  
 If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,  
 Or born the son of Gorlois, after death,  
 Or Uther's son, and born before his time,  
 Or whether there were truth in anything  
 Said by these three, there came to Camelopard, With Gawain and young Modred, her two sons,  
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent ; Whom as he could, not as he would, the king  
 Made feast for, saying, as they sat at meat,

"A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas—  
 Ye come from Arthur's court : think ye this king—  
 So few his knights, however braw they be—  
 Hath body know to beat his foemen down ? "

"O king," she cried, "and I will tell thee : few, Few, but all brave, all of one mind with him ; For I was near him when the savage yell Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat Crown'd on the dais, and his warriors cried, 'Be thou the king, and we will work thy will Who love thee.' Then the king in low deep tones, And simple words of great authority, Bound them by so strait vows to his own self, That when they rose, knighted from kneeling, some Were pale as at the passing of a ghost, Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one who wakes Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

"But when he spake and cheer'd his Table Round With large divine and comfortable words Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I beheld From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash A momentary likeness of the king : And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross And those around it and the Crucified, Down from the casement over Arthur, smote Flame-colour, vert and azure, in three rays, One falling upon each of three fair queens, Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright Sweet faces, who will help him at his need.

"And there I saw mage Merlin, whose vast wit And hundred winters are but as the hands

Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege. "And near him stood the Lady of the Lake, Who knows a subtler magic than his own— Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful. She gave the king his huge cross-hilted sword, Wherby to drive the heathen out : a mist <sup>face</sup> Of incense curl'd about her, and her Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom ; But there was heard among the holy hymns A voice as of the waters, for she dwells Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever storms May shake the world, and when the surface rolls, Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord.

"There likewise I beheld Excalibur Before him at his crowning borne, the sword That rose from out the bosom of the lake, And Arthur row'd across and took it rich With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt, Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so bright That men are blinded by it—on one side, Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world, 'Take me,' but turn the blade and you shall see, And written in the speech ye speak yourself, 'Cast me away !' And sad was Arthur's face Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him, 'Take thou and strike ! the time to cast away Is yet far-off.' So this great brand the king Took, and by this will beat his foes men down."

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought  
 To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,  
 Fixing full eyes of question on her face,  
 " The swallow and the swift are near akin,  
 But thou art closer to this noble prince,  
 Being his own dear sister " ; and she said,  
 " Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I " ;  
 " And therefore Arthur's sister ? " ask'd the King.  
 She answer'd, " These be secret things," and sign'd  
 To those two sons to pass and let them be.  
 And Gawain went, and breaking into song  
 Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair [saw :  
 Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he  
 But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,  
 And there half heard ; the same that afterward  
 Struck for the throne, and striking found his doom.

And then the Queen made answer,  
 " What know I ?  
 For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,  
 And dark in hair and eyes am I ; and dark  
 Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther, too,  
 Wellnigh to blackness ; but this king is fair  
 Beyond the race of Britons and of men.  
 Moreover, always in my mind I hear  
 A cry from out the dawning of my life,  
 A mother weeping, and I hear her say,  
 ' O that ye had some brother, pretty one,  
 To guard thee on the rough ways of the world. ' "  
 " Ay, " said the King, " and hear ye such a cry ?

But when did Arthur chance upon thee first ? "  
 " O king ! " she cried, " and I will tell thee true :  
 He found me first when yet a little maid :  
 Beaten I had been for a little fault Whereof I was not guilty ; and out I ran  
 And flung myself down on a bank of heath,  
 And hated this fair world and all therein,  
 And wept, and wish'd that I were dead ; and he—  
 I know not whether of himself he came,  
 Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can walk  
 Unseen at pleasure—he was at my side,  
 And spake sweet words, and comforted my heart,  
 And dried my tears, being a child with me.  
 And many a time he came, and over more  
 As I grew greater grew with me ; and sad  
 At times he seem'd, and sad with him was I,  
 Stern, too, at times, and then I loved him not,  
 But sweet again, and then I loved him well.  
 And now of late I see him less and less,  
 But those first days had golden hours for me,  
 For then I surely thought he would be king.  
 " But let me tell thee now another tale :  
 For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they say,  
 Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,  
 To hear him speak before he left his life.  
 Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the mage,  
 And when I enter'd told me that himself

And Merlin ever served about the king,  
Uther, before he died, and on the night  
When Uther in Tintagil past away  
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two  
Left the still king, and passing forth  
to breathe,  
Then from the castle gateway by the chasm  
Descending thro' the dismal night—a night  
In which the bounds of heaven and earth were lost—  
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps  
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape thereof  
A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern  
Bright with a shining people on the decks,  
And gone as soon as seen. And then the two  
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sca fall,  
Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,  
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep  
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged  
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:  
And down the wave and in the flame  
was borne  
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,  
Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried 'The King!  
Here is an heir for Uther!' And the fringe  
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,  
Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,  
And all at once all round him rose in fire,  
So that the child and he were clothed in fire.  
And presently thereafter follow'd calm,  
Free sky and stars: 'And this same child,' he said,

' Is he who reigns; nor could I part in peace  
Till this were told.' And saying this the seer  
Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of death,  
Not ever to be question'd any more  
Save on the further side; but when I met  
Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were truth—  
The shining dragon and the naked child  
Descending in the glory of the seas—  
He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me  
In riddling triplets of old time, and said :

" ' Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky!  
A young man will be wiser by and by;  
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.  
Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!  
And truth is this to me, and that to thee;  
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.  
Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows:  
Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?  
From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'

" ' So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but thou  
Fear not to give this king thine only child,  
Guinevere: so great bards of him will sing  
Hereafter; and dark sayings from of old  
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,  
And echo'd by old folk beside their fires  
For comfort after their wage-work is done,  
Speak of the king; and Merlin in our time  
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn

Tho' men may wound him that he  
will not die,  
But pass, again to come ; and then  
or now  
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,  
Till these and all men hail him for  
their king."

She spake and King Leodogran  
rejoiced,  
But musing " Shall I answer yea or  
nay ? "  
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and  
slept, and saw,  
Dreaming, a slope of land that ever  
grew,  
Field after field, up to a height, the  
peak  
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom  
king,  
Now looming, and now lost ; and on  
the slope  
The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd  
was driven,  
Fire glimpsed ; and all the land from  
roof and rick,  
In drifts of smoke before a rolling  
wind,  
Stream'd to the peak, and mingled  
with the haze  
And made it thicker ; while the phan-  
tom king  
Sent out at times a voice ; and here  
or there  
Stood one who pointed toward the  
voice, the rest  
Slew on and burnt, crying, " No  
king of ours,  
No son of Uther, and no king of  
ours " ;  
Till with a wink his dream was  
changed, the haze  
Descended, and the solid earth be-  
came  
As nothing, and the king stood out in  
heaven,  
Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke,  
and sent  
Ulfius, and Brastias and Bedivere,  
Back to the court of Arthur answer-  
ing yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior  
whom he loved

And honour'd most, Sir Lancelot, to  
ride forth  
And bring the Queen ;—and watch'd  
him from the gates :  
And Lancelot past away among the  
flowers  
(For then was latter April), and re-  
turn'd  
Among the flowers, in May, with  
Guinevere.  
To whom arrived, by Dubric the high  
saint,  
Chief of the church in Britain, and  
before  
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the  
king  
That morn was married, while in  
stainless white,  
The fair beginners of a nobler time,  
And glorying in their vows and him,  
his knights  
Stood round him, and rejoicing in  
his joy.  
And holy Dubric spread his hands and  
spake,  
" Reign ye, and live and love, and  
make the world  
Other, and may thy Queen be one  
with thee,  
And all this Order of thy Table  
Round  
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their  
king."

Then at the marriage feast came in  
from Rome,  
The slowly-fading mistress of the  
world,  
Great lords, who claim'd the tribute  
as of yore.  
But Arthur spake, " Behold, for these  
have sworn  
To fight my wars, and worship me  
their king ;  
The old order changeth, yielding  
place to now ;  
And we that fight for our fair father  
Christ,  
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and  
old  
To drive the heathen from your  
Roman wall,  
No tribute will we pay " : so those  
great lords

Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove with Rome.  And Arthur and his knighthood for a space      [strength the king Were all one will, and thro' that	Drew in the petty princedoms under him, Fought, and in twelve great battles overcame The heathen hordes, and made a realm and reign'd.
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## THE HOLY GRAIL

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale, Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd The Pure, Had pass'd into the silent life of prayer, Praise, fast, and alms ; and leaving for the cowl The helmet in an abbey far away From Camelot, there, and not long after, died.  And one, a fellow-monk among the rest, Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the rest, And honour'd him, and wrought into his heart A way by love that waken'd love within, To answer that which came : and as they sat Beneath a world-old yew-tree, dark- ening half The cloisters, on a gustful April morn That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke Above them, ere the summer when he died, The monk Ambrosius question'd Percivale :	Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale : but thoo, When first thou camest—such a courtesy Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice —I knew For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall ; For good ye are and bad, and like to coins, [of you Some true, some light, but every one Stamp'd with the image of the King : and now Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round, My brother ? was it earthly passion crost ? ”  “ Nay,” said the knight ; “ for no such passion mine. But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail Drove me from all vainglories, rival- ries, And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out Among us in the jousts, while women watch Who wins, who falls ; and waste the spiritual strength Within us, better offer'd up to Heaven.”  To whom the monk : “ The Holy Grail !—I trust We are green in Heaven's eyes ; but here too much We moulder—as to things without I mean—
“ O brother, I have seen this yew- tree smoke, Spring after spring, for half a hundred years : For never have I known the world without,	

Yet one of your own knights, a guest  
of ours,  
Told us of this in our refectory,  
But spake with such a sadness and so  
low  
We heard not half of what he said.  
What is it?  
Tho' phantom of a cup that comes and  
goes?"

"Nay, monk! what phantom?"  
answer'd Percivale.

"The cup, the cup itself, from which  
our Lord  
Drank at the last sad supper with His  
own.  
This, from the blessed land of Aro-  
mat—  
After the day of darkness, when the  
dead  
Went wandering o'er Moriah—the  
good saint,  
Arimathæcan Joseph, journeying  
brought  
To Glastonbury, where the winter  
thorn  
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of  
our Lord,  
And there awhile it bode; and if a  
man  
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at  
once,  
By faith, of all his ills. But then the  
times  
Grew to such evil that the holy cup  
Was caught away to Heaven, and  
disappear'd."

To whom the monk: "From our  
old books I know  
That Joseph came of old to Glaston-  
bury,  
And there the heathen Prince, Arvira-  
gus,  
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to  
build;  
And there he built with wattles from  
the marsh  
A little lonely church in days of yore,  
For so they say, these books of ours,  
but seem  
Mute of this miracle, far as I have  
read.  
But who first saw the holy thing to-  
day?"

"A woman," answer'd Percivale,  
"a nun,  
And one no further off in blood from  
me  
Than sister; and if ever holy maid  
With knees of adoration wore the  
stone,  
A holy maid; tho' never maiden  
glow'd,  
But that was in her earlier maiden-  
hood,  
With such a fervent flame of human  
love,  
Which being rudely blunted, glanced  
and shot  
Only to holy things; to prayer and  
praise  
She gave herself, to fast and alms.  
And yet,  
Nun as she was, the scandal of the  
Court,  
Sin against Arthur and the Table  
Round,  
And the strange sound of an adulter-  
ous race,  
Across the iron grating of her cell  
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all  
the more.

"And he to whom she told her sins,  
or what  
Her all but utter whiteness held for  
sin,  
A man well-nigh a hundred winters  
old,  
Spake often with her of the Holy  
Grail, [six,  
A legend handed down thro' five or  
And each of these a hundred winters  
old,  
From our Lord's time. And when  
King Arthur made  
His Table Round, and all men's  
hearts became  
Clean for a season, surely he had  
thought  
That now the Holy Grail would come  
again;  
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that  
it would come,  
And heal the world of all their wicked-  
ness!  
'O Father!' asked the maiden,  
'might it come'

To me by prayer and fasting ? '  
 ' Nay,' said he,  
 ' I know not, for thy heart is pure as  
 snow.'  
 And so she pray'd an' fasted, till the  
 sun  
 Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her,  
 and I thought  
 She might have risen and floated  
 when I saw her.

" For on a day she sent to speak  
 with me.  
 And when she came to speak, behold  
 her eyes  
 Beyond my knowing of them, beauti-  
 ful,  
 Beyond all knowing of them, wonder-  
 ful,  
 Beautiful in the light of holiness.  
 And ' O my brother, Percivale,' she  
 said,  
 ' Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy  
 Grail :  
 For, waked at dead of night, I heard  
 a sound  
 As of a silver horn from o'er the hills  
 Blown, and I thought, " It is not  
 Arthur's use  
 To hunt by moonlight " ; and the  
 slender sound  
 As from distance beyond distance  
 grew  
 Coming upon me—O never harp nor  
 horn,  
 Nor aught we blow with breath, or  
 touch with hand, [then  
 Was like that music as it came ; and  
 Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and  
 silver beam,  
 And down the long 'beam stole the  
 Holy Grail,  
 Rose-red with beatings in it, as if  
 alive,  
 Till all the white walls of my cell were  
 dyed  
 With rosy colours leaping on the  
 wall ;  
 And then the music faded, and the  
 Grail  
 Pass'd, and the beam decay'd, and  
 from the walls  
 The rosy quiverings died into the  
 night.

So now the Holy Thing is here again  
 Among us, brother, fast thou, too, and  
 pray,  
 And tell thy brother knights to fast  
 and pray,  
 That so perchance the vision may be  
 seen  
 By thee and those, and all the world  
 be heal'd.'

" Then leaving the pale nun, I  
 spake of this  
 To all men ; and myself fasted and  
 pray'd  
 Always, and many among us many  
 a week  
 Fasted and pray'd even to the utter-  
 most,  
 Expectant of the wonder that would  
 be.

" And one there was among us,  
 ever moved  
 Among us in white armour, Galahad.  
 ' God make thee good as thou art  
 beautiful,'  
 Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him  
 knight ; and none,  
 In so young youth, was ever made a  
 knight  
 Till Galahad ; and this Galahad, when  
 he heard  
 My sister's vision, fill'd me with  
 amaze ;  
 His eyes became so like her own, they  
 seem'd  
 Hers, and himself her brother more  
 than I.

" Sister or brother none had he ;  
 but some  
 Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some  
 said  
 Begotten by enchantment—chat-  
 terers they,  
 Like birds of passage piping up and  
 down,  
 That gape for flies—we know not  
 whence they come ;  
 For when was Lancelot wanderingly  
 lewd ?

" But she, the wan sweet maiden  
 shore away

Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair  
 Which made a silken mat-work for her feet ;  
 And out of this she plaited broad and long  
 A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread  
 And crimson in the belt a strange device,  
 A crimson grail within a silver beam ;  
 And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,  
 Saying, ' My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,  
 O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,  
 I, maiden, round thee, maidon, bind my belt.  
 Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,  
 And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king  
 Far in the spiritual city ' : and as she spake [eyes  
 She sent the deathless passion in her Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind  
 On him, and he believed in her belief.

" Then came a year of miracle : O brother,  
 In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,  
 Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,  
 And carven with strange figures ; and in and out  
 The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll  
 Of letters in a tongue no man could read.  
 And Merlin call'd it ' The Siege perilous,'  
 Perilous for good and ill ; ' for there,' he said,  
 ' No man could sit but he should lose himself ' :  
 And once by misadvertence Merlin sat  
 In his own chair, and so was lost ; but he,  
 Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,  
 Cried, ' If I lose myself I save myself ! '

" Then on a summer night it came to pass,  
 While the great banquet lay along the hall,  
 That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

" And all at once, as there we sat, we heard  
 A cracking and a riving of the roofs,  
 And rending, and a blast, and over-head  
 Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.  
 And in the blast there smote along the hall  
 A beam of light seven times more clear than day :  
 And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail  
 All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,  
 And none might see who bare it, and it past.  
 But every knight beheld his fellow's face  
 As in a glory, and all the knights arose,  
 And staring each at other like dumb men  
 Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

" I sware a vow before them all, that I,  
 Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride  
 A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,  
 Until I found and saw it, as the nun  
 My sister saw it ; and Galahad sware  
 the vow,  
 And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,  
 And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,  
 And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest."

Then spake the monk Ambrosius,  
 Asking him,  
 " What said the King ? Did Arthur take the vow ? "

" Nay, for my lord," said Percivale,  
 " the King,

Was not in hall : for early that same day,  
'Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold,  
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall  
Crying on help : for all her shining hair  
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky arm  
Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all she wore  
Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn  
In tempest : so the King arose and went  
To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees  
That made such honey in his realm.  
Howbeit  
Some little of this marvel he, too, saw,  
Returning o'er the plain that then began  
To darken under Camelot ; whence the King  
Look'd up, calling aloud, ' Lo there ! the roofs  
Of our great hall are rolled in thunder-smoke !  
Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt.'  
For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,  
As having there so oft with all his knights  
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

" O brother, had you known our mighty hall,  
Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago !  
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,  
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,  
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,  
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,  
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.  
And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt  
With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall :

And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,  
And in the second men are slaying beasts,  
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,  
And on the fourth are men with growing wings,  
And over all one statue in the mould Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,  
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.  
And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown  
And both the wings are made of gold, and flame  
At sunrise till the people in far fields, Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,  
Behold it, crying, ' We have still a king.'

" And, brother, had you known our hall within,  
Broader and higher than any in all the lands !  
Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,  
And all the light that falls upon the board  
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King.  
Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,  
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,  
Where Arthur finds the brand, Excalibur.  
And also one to the west, and counter to it,  
And blank : and who shall blazon it ? when and how ?—  
O there, perchance, when all our wars are done,  
The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

" So to this hall full quickly rode the King,  
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,  
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt

In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.  
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and  
saw  
The golden dragon sparkling over all :  
And many of those who burnt the  
hold, their arms  
Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed  
with smoke, and scar'd,  
Follow'd, and in among bright faces,  
ours,  
Full of the vision, prest : and then  
the King  
Spake to me, being nearest, "Perci-  
vale,"  
(Because the hall was all in tumult—  
some  
Vowing, and some protesting), 'what  
is this ?'

" O brother, when I told him what  
had chanced,  
My sister's vision, and the rest, his  
face  
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than  
once,  
When some brave deed seem'd to be  
done in vain,  
Darken ; and ' Woe is me, my  
knights,' he cried,  
' Had I been here, ye had not sworn  
the vow.'  
Bold was mine answer, ' I had thyself  
been here,  
My King, thou wouldest have sworn.'  
' Yea, yea,' said he,  
' Art thou so bold and hast not seen  
the Grail ? '

" ' Nay, Lord, I heard the sound, I  
saw the light,  
But since I did not see the Holy  
Thing,  
I sware a vow to follow it till I saw.'

" Then when he asked us, knight by  
knight, if any  
Had seen it, all their answers were as  
one :  
' Nay, Lord, and therfore have we  
sworn our vows.'

" ' Lo now,' said Arthur, ' have ye  
seen a cloud ?  
What go ye into the wilderness to  
see ? '

" Then Galahad on the sudden, and  
in a voice  
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur,  
call'd,  
' But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy  
Grail,  
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a  
cry—  
" O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow  
me." '

" ' Ah ! Galahad, Galahad,' said the  
King, ' for such  
As thou art is the vision, not for these.  
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a  
sign—  
Holier is none, my Percivale, than  
she—  
A sign to maim this Order which I  
made.  
But you, that follow but the leader's  
bell'  
(Brother, the King was hard upon his  
knights)  
' Taliesin is our fullest throat of  
song,  
And one hath sung and all the dumb  
will sing. [borne  
Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath over-  
Five knights at once, and every  
younger knight,  
Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,  
Till overborne by one, he learns—and  
ye,  
What are ye ? Galahads ?—no, nor  
Percivales'  
(For thus it pleased the King to range  
me close  
After Sir Galahad); ' nay,' said he,  
' but men  
With strength and will to right the  
wrong'd, of power  
To lay the sudden heads of violence  
flat,  
Knights that in twelve great battles  
splash'd and dyed  
The strong White Horse in his own  
heathen blood—  
But one hath seen, and all the blind  
will see.  
Go, since your vows are sacred, being  
made :  
Yet—for ye know the cries of all my  
realm

Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my knights,  
Your places being vacant at my side,  
This chance of noble deeds will come and go  
Unchallenged, while you follow wandering fires  
Lost in the quagmire? Many of you, yea most,  
Return no more: ye think I show myself  
Too dark a prophet: come now, let us meet  
The morrow morn once more in one full field  
Of gracious pastime, that once more the King,  
Before you leave him for his Quest, may count  
The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,  
Rejoicing in that Order which he made.'

" So when the sun broke next from under ground,  
All the great table of our Arthur closed  
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,  
So many lances broken—never yet Had Camelot seen the like, since Arthur came;  
And I myself and Galahad, for a strength  
Was in us from the vision, overthrew So many knights that all the people cried,  
And almost burst the barriers in their heat,  
Shouting ' Sir Galahad and Sir Perci-  
vale! '

" But when the next day brake from under ground—  
O brother, had you known our Camelot,  
Built by old kings, age after age, so old  
The King himself had fears that it would fall,  
So strange, and rich, and dim; for where the roofs  
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,

Met foreheads all along the street of those  
Who watch'd us pass: and lower, and where the long Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the necks  
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,  
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers  
Fell as we past; and men and boys astride  
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,  
At all the corners, named us each by name,  
Calling ' God speed! ' but in the street below  
The knights and ladies wept, and rich and poor  
Wept, and the King himself could hardly speak  
For grief, and in the middle street the Queen,  
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd aloud,  
' This madness has come on us for our sins.'  
And then we reach'd the weirdly-sculptured gate,  
Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,  
And thence departed every one his way.  
" And I was lifted up in heart, and thought  
Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,  
How my strong lance had beaten down the knights,  
So many and famous names; and never yet  
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth so green,  
For all my blood danced in me, and I knew  
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.  
" Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,  
That most of us would follow wandering fires,  
Came like a driving gloom across my mind.

Then every evil word I had spoken once,  
And every evil thought I had thought of old,  
And every evil deed I ever did,  
Awoke and cried, ' This Quest is not for thee.'  
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself  
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,  
And I was thirsty even unto death ;  
And I, too, cried, ' This Quest is not for thee.'

" And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst  
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook,  
With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white  
Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave,  
And took both ear and eye ; and o'er the brook  
Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook  
Fallen, and on the lawns. ' I will rest here,'  
I said, ' I am not worthy of the Quest' ;  
But even while I drank the brook, and ate  
The goodly apples, all these things at once  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone,  
And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns.

" And then behold a woman at a door  
Spinning ; and fair the house whereby she sat,  
And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,  
And all her bearing gracious ; and she rose  
Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,  
' Rest here ' ; but when I touched her, lo ! she, too,  
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house  
Became no better than a broken shed,

And in it a dead babe ; and also this I fell into dust, and I was left alone.

" And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.  
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,  
And where it smote the plowshare in the field,  
The plowman left his plowing, and fell down [pail],  
Before it ; where it glitter'd on her The milkmaid left her milking, and fell down  
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought  
' The sun is rising,' tho' the sun had risen.  
Then was I ware of one that on me moved  
In golden armour with a crown of gold  
About a casque all jewels ; and his horse  
In golden armour jewell'd everywhere :  
And on the splendour came, flashing me blind ;  
And seem'd to me the Lord of all the world,  
Being so huge. But when I thought he meant  
To crush me, moving on me, lo ! he, too,  
Opened his arms to embrace me as he came,  
And up I went and touch'd him, and ho, too,  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone  
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

" And I rode on and found a mighty hill,  
And on the top, a city wall'd : the spires  
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.  
And by the galeway stirr'd a crowd ; and these  
Cried to me climbing, ' Welcome, Percivale !  
Thou mightiest and thou purest among men ! '

And glad was I and clomb, but found  
at top  
No man, nor any voice. And thence  
I past  
Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw  
That man had once dwelt there ; but  
there I found  
Only one man of an exceeding age.  
' Where is that goodly company ? '  
said I,  
' That so cried out upon me ? ' and he  
had  
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet  
gasp'd  
' Whence and what art thou ? ' and  
even as he spoke  
Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I  
Was left alone once more, and cried in  
grief,  
' Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself  
And touch it, it will crumble into  
dust.'

" And thence I dropt into a lowly  
vale,  
Low as the hill was high, and where  
the vale  
Was lowest, found a chapel and  
thereby  
A holy hermit in a hermitage,  
To whom I told my phantoms, and  
he said :

" ' O son, thou hast not true  
humility,  
The highest virtue, mother of them  
all ;  
For when the Lord of all things made  
Himself  
Naked of glory for His mortal change,  
" Take thou my robe," she said, " for  
all is thine,"  
And all her form shone forth with  
sudden light  
So that the angels were amazed, and  
she  
Follow'd him down, and like a flying  
star  
Led on the grey-hair'd wisdom of the  
east ;  
But her thou hast not known : for  
what is this  
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and  
thy sins ?

Thou hast not lost thyself to save  
thyself  
As Galahad.' When the hermit  
made an end,  
In silver armour suddenly Galahad  
shone  
Before us, and against the chapel door  
Laid lance, and enter'd, and we knelt  
in prayer.  
And there the hermit slaked my  
burning thirst  
And at the sacring of the mass I saw  
The holy elements alone ; but he :  
' Saw ye no more ? I, Galahad, saw  
the Grail,  
The Holy Grail, descend upon the  
shrine :  
I saw the fiery face as of a child  
That smote itself into the bread, and  
went ;  
And hither am I come ; and never  
yet  
Hath what thy sister taught me first  
to see,  
This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side,  
nor come  
Cover'd, but moving with me night  
and day,  
Fainter by day, but always in the  
night  
Blood-red, and sliding down the  
blacken'd marsh  
Blood-red, and on the naked moun-  
tain top  
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere  
below  
Blood-red. And in the strength of  
this I rode,  
Shattering all evil customs every-  
where,  
And past thro' Pagan realms, and  
made them mine,  
And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and  
bore them down,  
And broke thro' all, and in the  
strength of this  
Come victor. But my time is hard  
at hand,  
And hence I go ; and one will crown  
me king  
Far in the spiritual city ; and come  
thou, too,  
For thou shalt see the vision when I  
go.'

“ While thus he spake, his eye,  
dwelling on mine,  
Drew me, with power upon me, till I  
grew  
One with him, to believe as he be-  
lieved.  
Then, when the day began to wane,  
we went.

“ There rose a hill that none but  
man could climb,  
Scar'd with a hundred wintry water-  
courses—  
Storm at the top, and when we gain'd  
it, storm  
Round us and death; for every  
moment glanced  
His silver arms and gloom'd: so  
quick and thick  
The lightnings here and there to left  
and right  
Struck, till the dry old trunks about  
us, dead,  
Yea, rotten with a hundred years of  
death,  
Sprang into fire: and at the base we  
found  
On either hand, as far as eye could  
see,  
A great black swamp and of an evil  
smell,  
Part black, part whiton'd with the  
bones of men,  
Not to be crost, save that some  
ancient king  
Had built a way, where, link'd with  
many a bridge,  
A thousand piers ran into the great  
Sea.  
And Galahad fled along them bridge  
by bridge,  
And every bridge as quickly as he  
crost  
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I  
yearn'd  
To follow; and thrice above him all  
the heavens  
Open'd and blazed with thunder such  
as seem'd  
Shoutings of all the sons of God: and  
first  
At once I saw him far on the great  
Sea,  
In silver shining armour starry-clear;

And o'er his head the holy vessel  
hung  
Clothed in white samite or a luminous  
cloud.  
And with exceeding swiftness ran the  
boat  
If boat it were—I saw not whence it  
came.  
And when the heavens open'd and  
blazed again  
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—  
And had he set the sail, or had the  
boat  
Become a living creature clad with  
wings?  
And o'er his head the holy vessel hung  
redder than any rose, a joy to me,  
For now I knew the veil had been  
withdrawn.  
Then in a moment when they blazed  
again  
Opening, I saw the least of little stars  
Down on the waste, and straight  
beyond the star  
I saw the spiritual city and all her  
spires  
And gateways in a glory like one  
pearl—  
[saints—  
No larger, tho' the goal of all the  
Strike from the sca; and from the  
star thereto shot  
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and  
there  
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy  
Grail,  
Which never eyes on earth again  
shall see.  
Then fell the floods of heaven drown-  
ing the deep.  
And how my feet recross'd the death-  
ful ridge  
No memory in me lives; but that I  
touch'd  
The chapel-doors at dawn I know;  
and thence  
Taking my war-horse from the holy  
man,  
Glad that no phantom vext me more,  
return'd  
To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's  
wars.”

“ O brother,” ask'd Ambrosius,—  
“ for in sooth

These ancient books—and they would  
win thee—teem,  
Only I find not thore this Holy Grail,  
With miracles and marvels like to  
these,  
Not all unlike; which oftentime I  
read,  
Who read but on my breviary with  
ease,  
Till my head swims; and then go  
forth and pass  
Down to the little-thorpe that lies so  
close,  
And almost plaster'd like a martin's  
nest  
To these old walls—and mingle with  
our folk;  
And knowing every honest face of  
theirs,  
As well as ever shepherd knew his  
sheep,  
And every homely secret in their  
hearts,  
Delight myself with gossip and old  
wives,  
And ills and aches, and teethings,  
lyings-in,  
And mirthful sayings, children of the  
place,  
That have no meaning half a league  
away:  
Or lulling random squabbles when  
they rise,  
Chafferings and chatterings at the  
market-cross,  
Rejoice, small man, in this small  
world of mine,  
Yea, even in their hens and in their  
eggs—  
O brother, saving this Sir Galahad  
Came ye on none but phantoms in  
your quest,  
No man, no woman?"

Then, Sir Percivale:  
" All men, to one so bound by such a  
vow,  
And women were as phantoms. O,  
my brother,  
Why wilt thou shame me to confess to  
thee  
How far I falter'd from my quest and  
vow?  
For after I had lain so many nights

A bedmate of the snail and eft and  
snake,  
In grass and burdock, I was changed  
to wan  
And meagre, and the vision had not  
come;  
And then I chanced upon a goodly  
town  
With one great dwelling in the middle  
of it;  
Thither I made, and there was I  
disarm'd  
By maidens each as fair as any flower:  
But when they led me into hall, be-  
hold  
The Princess of that castle was the  
one,  
Brother, and that one only, who had  
ever  
Made my heart leap; for when I  
moved of old  
A slender page about her father's hall,  
And she a slender maiden, all my  
heart  
Went after her with longing: yet we  
twain [vow.  
Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a  
And now I came upon her once again,  
And one had wedded her, and he was  
dead,  
And all his land and wealth and state  
were hers.  
And while I tarried, every day she  
set  
A banquet richer than the day before  
By me; for all her longing and her  
will  
Was toward me as of old; till one  
fair morn,  
I walking to and fro beside a stream  
That flash'd across her orchard under-  
neath  
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my  
walk,  
And calling me the greatest of all  
knights,  
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the  
first time,  
And gave herself and all her wealth  
to me.  
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning  
word,  
That most of us would follow wander-  
ing fires,

And the Quest faded in my heart.  
 Anon,  
 The heads of all her people drew to  
 me,  
 With supplication both of knees and  
 tongue :  
 ' We have heard of thee : thou art  
 our greatest knight,  
 Our Lady says it, and we well believe :  
 Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,  
 And thou shalt be as Arthur in our  
 land.'

O me, my brother ! but one night  
 my vow  
 Burnt me within, so that I rose and  
 fled,  
 But wail'd and wept, and hated mine  
 own self,  
 And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but  
 her :  
 Then after I was join'd with Galahad  
 Cared not for her, nor anything upon  
 earth.'

Then said the monk, " Poor men,  
 when yule is cold,  
 Must be content to sit by little firs.  
 And this am I, so that ye care for me  
 Ever so little ; yea, and blest be  
 Heaven  
 That brought thee here to this poor  
 house of ours,  
 Where all the brethren are so hard,  
 to warm  
 My cold heart with a friend : but O  
 the pity  
 To find thine own first love once more  
 —to hold,  
 Hold her a wealthy bride within thine  
 arms,  
 Or all but hold, and then—cast her  
 aside,  
 Foregoing all her sweetness, like a  
 weed.  
 For we that want the warmth of  
 double life,  
 We that are plagued with dreams of  
 something sweet  
 Beyond all sweetness in a life so  
 rich,—  
 Ah ! blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-  
 wise,  
 Seeing I never stray'd beyond the  
 cell,

But live like an old badger in his  
 earth,  
 With earth about him everywhere,  
 despite  
 All fast and penance. Saw ye none  
 beside,  
 None of your knights ? "

" Yea so," said Percivale :  
 " One night my pathway swerving  
 east, I saw  
 The pelican on the casque of our Sir  
 Bors  
 All in the middle of the rising moon :  
 And toward him spurr'd and hail'd  
 him, and he me,  
 And each made joy of either ; then  
 he ask'd,  
 ' Where is he ? hast thou seen him—  
 Lancelot ? ' ' Once,'  
 Said good Sir Bors, ' he dash'd across  
 me—mad,  
 And maddening what he rode : and  
 when I cried,  
 " Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest  
 So holy ? " Lancelot shouted, " Stay  
 me not !  
 I have been the slaggard, and I ride  
 apace,  
 For now thore is a lion in the way."  
 So vanish'd.'

" Then Sir Bors had ridden on  
 Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,  
 Because his former madness, once  
 the talk  
 And scandal of our table, had re-  
 turn'd ;  
 For Lancelot's kith and kin so wor-  
 ship him  
 That ill to him is ill to them ; to Bors  
 Beyond the rest : he well had been  
 content  
 Not to have seen, so Lancelot might  
 have seen,  
 The Holy Cup of healing ; and,  
 indeed,  
 Being so clouded with his grief and  
 love,  
 Small heart was his after the Holy  
 Quest :  
 If God would send the vision, well :  
 if not,  
 The Quest and he were in the hands  
 of heaven.

" And then, with small adventure  
 met, Sir Bors  
 Rode to the lonest tract of all the  
 realm,  
 And found a people there among their  
 crags,  
 Our race and blood, a remnant that  
 were left  
 Paynim amid their circles, and the  
 stones  
 They pitch up straight to heaven :  
 and their wise men  
 Were strong in that old magic which  
 can trace  
 The wandering of the stars, and  
 scoff'd at him  
 And this high Quest as at a simple  
 thing :  
 Told him he follow'd — almost  
 Arthur's words—  
 A mocking fire : ' what other fire  
 than he,  
 Whereby the blood beats, and the  
 blossom blows,  
 And the sea rolls, and all the world  
 is warm'd ? '  
 And when his answer chafed them,  
 the rough crowd, [priests,  
 Hearing he had a difference with their  
 Seized him, and bound and plunged  
 him into a cell  
 Of great piled stones ; and lying  
 bounden there  
 In darkness thro' innumerable hours  
 He heard the hollow-ringings heavens  
 sweep  
 Over him, till by miracle—what  
 else ?—  
 Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt  
 and fell,  
 Such as no wind could move : and  
 thro' the gap  
 Glimmer'd the streaming scud : then  
 came a night  
 Still as the day was loud ; and thro'  
 the gap  
 The seven clear stars of Arthur's  
 Table Round—  
 For, brother, so one night, because  
 they roll  
 Thro' such a round in heaven, we  
 named the stars,  
 Rejoicing in ourselves and in our  
 king—

And these, like bright eyes of familiar  
 friends,  
 In on him shone, ' And then to me, to  
 me,'  
 Said good Sir Bors, ' beyond all hopes  
 of mine,  
 Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for  
 myself—  
 Across the seven clear stars—O grace  
 to me—  
 In colour like the fingers of a hand  
 Before a burning taper, the sweet  
 Grail [peal'd  
 Glided and past, and close upon it  
 A sharp quick thunder.' Afterwards  
 a maid,  
 Who kept our holy faith among her  
 kin  
 In secret, entering, loosed and let  
 him go."

To whom the monk : " And I  
 remember now  
 That pelican on the casque : Sir Bors  
 it was  
 Who spake so low and sadly at our  
 board ;  
 And mighty reverent at our grace was  
 he :  
 A square-set man and honest ; and  
 his eyes,  
 An out-door sign of all the warmth  
 within,  
 Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath  
 a cloud,  
 But heaven had meant it for a sunny  
 one :  
 Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else ? But  
 when ye reach'd  
 The city, found ye all your knights  
 return'd,  
 Or was there sooth in Arthur's pro-  
 phesy,  
 Tell me, and what said each, and  
 what the King ? "

Then answer'd Percivale : " And  
 that can I,  
 Brother, and truly ; since the living  
 words  
 Of so great men as Lancelot and  
 our King  
 Pass not from door to door and out  
 again,

But sit within the house. O, when  
we reach'd  
The city, our horses stumbling as they  
trode  
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,  
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd  
cockatrices,  
And shatter'd talbots, which had left  
the stoncs  
Raw, that they fell from, brought us  
to the hall.

" And there sat Arthur on the dais-  
throne,  
And those that had gone out upon the  
Quest,  
Wasted and worn, and but a tithc of  
them,  
And those that had not, stood before  
the King.  
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bade  
me hail,  
Saying, ' A welfare in thine eye re-  
proves  
Our fear of some disastrous chance  
for thee  
On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding  
ford.  
So fierce a gale made havock hero of  
late  
Among the strange devices of our  
kings ;  
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall  
of ours,  
And from the statue Merlin moulded  
for us  
Half-wrench'd a golden wing ; but  
now—the quest,  
This vision—hast thou seen the Holy  
Cup,  
That Joseph brought of old to  
Glastonbury ? '

" So when I told him all thyself  
hast heard,  
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt  
resolve  
To pass away into the quiet life,  
He answer'd not, but, sharply turn-  
ing, ask'd  
Of Gawain, ' Gawain, was this Quest  
for theo ? '

" ' Nay, lord,' said Gawain, ' not  
for such as I.

Therefore I communed with a saintly  
man,  
Who made me sure the Quest was not  
for me ;  
For I was much awearied of the  
Quest :  
But found a silk pavilion in a field,  
And merry maidens in it ; and then  
this gale  
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-  
pin,  
And blew my merry maidens all  
about  
With all discomfort ; yea, and but  
for this,  
My twelvemonth and a day were  
pleasant to me.'

" He ceased ; and Arthur turn'd  
to whom at first  
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,  
push'd  
Athwart the throng to Lancelot,  
caught his hand,  
Held it, and there, half-hidden by  
him, stood,  
Until the King espied him, saying to  
him,  
' Hail, Bors ! if ever loyal man and  
true  
Could see it, thou hast seen the  
Grail ' ; and Bors,  
' Ask me not, for I may not speak of  
it,  
I saw it ' : and the tears were in his  
eyes.

" Then there remain'd but Lancelot,  
for the rest  
Spake but of sundry perils in the  
storm ;  
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy  
Writ,  
Our Arthur kept his best until the  
last ;  
' Thou, too, my Lancelot,' ask'd the  
King, my friend,  
Our mightiest, hath this Quest  
avail'd for thee ? '  
" ' Our mightiest ! ' answer'd  
Lancelot, with a groan ;  
' O King ! '—and when he paused,  
methought I spied  
A dying fire of madness in his eyes—

' O King, my friend, if friend of thine  
 I be,  
 Happier are those that welter in their  
 sin,  
 Swine in the mud, that cannot see for  
 slime,  
 Slime of the ditch : but in me lived  
 a sin  
 So strange, of such a kind, that all of  
 pure,  
 Noble, and knightly in me twined and  
 clung  
 Round that one sin, until the whole-  
 some flower  
 And poisonous grew together, each as  
 each,  
 Not to be pluck'd asunder ; and when  
 thy knights  
 Sware, I sware with them only in the  
 hope [Grail  
 That could I touch or see the Holy  
 They might be pluck'd asunder.  
 Then I spake  
 To one most holy saint, who wept  
 and said,  
 That save they could be pluck'd  
 asunder, all  
 My quest were but in vain ; to whom  
 I vow'd  
 That I would work according as he  
 will'd.  
 And forth I went, and while I yearn'd  
 and strove  
 To tear the twain asunder in my  
 heart,  
 My madness came upon me as of old,  
 And whipt me into waste fields far  
 away ;  
 There was I beaten down by little  
 men,  
 Mean knights, to whom the moving  
 of my sword  
 And shadow of my spear had been  
 nown  
 To scare them from me once ; and  
 then I came  
 All in my folly to the naked shorc,  
 Wide flats, where nothing but coarse  
 grasses grew ;  
 But such a blast, my King, began to  
 blow,  
 So loud a blast along theshore and sea,  
 Ye could not hear the waters for the  
 blast,  
 Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all  
 the sea  
 Drove like a cataract, and all the  
 sand  
 Swept like a river, and the clouded  
 heavens  
 Were shaken with the motion and the  
 sound.  
 And blackening in the sea-foam  
 sway'd a boat,  
 Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with  
 a chain ;  
 And in my madness to myself I said,  
 " I will embark and I will lose myself,  
 And in the great sea wash away my  
 sin."  
 I burst the chain, I sprang into the  
 boat.  
 Seven days I drove along the dreary  
 deep,  
 And with me drove the moon and all  
 the stars ;  
 And the wind fell, and on the seventh  
 night  
 I heard the shingle grinding in the  
 surge,  
 And felt the boat shock earth, and  
 looking up,  
 Behold, the enchanted towers of  
 Carbonek,  
 A castle like a rock upon a rock,  
 With chasm-like portals open to the  
 sea,  
 And steps that met the breaker !  
 there was none  
 Stood near it but a lion on each side  
 That kept the entry, and the moon  
 was full.  
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up  
 the stairs.  
 There drew my sword. With sudden-  
 flaring mancs  
 Those two great beasts rose upright  
 like a man,  
 Each gript a shoulder, and I stood  
 between ;  
 And, when I would have smitten them,  
 heard a voice,  
 " Doubt not, go forward ; if thou  
 doubt, the beasts  
 Will tear thee piccemeal." Then with violence  
 The sword was dash'd from out my  
 hand, and fell.

And up into the sounding hall I past ;  
 But nothing in the sounding hall I  
     saw,  
 No bench nor table, painting on the  
     wall,  
 Or shield of knight ; only the rounded  
     moon  
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.  
 But always in the quiet house I  
     heard,  
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,  
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost  
     tower  
 To the eastward : up I climb'd a  
     thousand steps  
 With pain : as in a dream I seem'd to  
     climb  
 For ever : at the last I reach'd a door,  
 A light was in the crannies, and I  
     heard,  
 " Glory and joy and honour to our  
     Lord  
 And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail." Then in my madness I essay'd the  
     door ;  
 It gave ; and thro' a stormy glare, a  
     heat  
 As from a seventimes-heated furnace,  
     I,  
 Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I  
     was,  
 With such a fierceness that I swoon'd  
     away—  
 O, yet methought I saw the Holy  
     Grail,  
 All pall'd in crimson samite, and  
     around  
 Great angels, awful shapes, and wings  
     and eyes,  
 And but for all my madness and my  
     sin,  
 And then my swooning, I had sworn  
     I saw  
 That which I saw ; but what I saw  
     was veil'd  
 And cover'd ; and this quest was not  
     for me.'

" So speaking, and here ceasing,  
 Lancelot left  
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—  
     nay,  
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish  
     words.—

A rockless and irreverent knight was  
     he,  
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his  
     King,—  
 Well, I will tell thee : ' O king, my  
     liege,' he said,  
 ' Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of  
     thine ?  
 When have I stinted stroke in  
     foughten field ?  
 But as for thine, my good friend,  
     Percivale,  
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven  
     men mad,  
 Yea, made our mightiest madder  
     than our least.  
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I  
     swear,  
 I will be deafer than the blue-eyed  
     cat,  
 And thrice as blind as any noonday  
     owl,  
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,  
 Henceforward.'

    " ' Deafer,' said the blameless  
     King,  
 ' Gawain, and blinder unto holy  
     things  
 Hope not to make thyself by idle  
     vows,  
 Being too blind to have desire to see.  
 But if indeed there came a sign from  
     heaven,  
 Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Perci-  
     vale,  
 For these have seen according to  
     their sight.  
 For every fiery prophet in old times,  
 And all the sacred madness of the  
     bard,  
 When God made music thro' them,  
     could but speak  
 His music by the framework and the  
     chord ;  
 And as ye saw it ye have spoken  
     truth.

    " ' Nay—but thou earnest, Lancelot :  
     never yet  
 Could all of true and noble in knight  
     and man  
 Twine round one sin, whatever it  
     might be,

With such a closeness, but apart  
there grew,  
Save that he were the swine thou  
spakest of,  
Some root of knighthood and pure  
nobleness ;  
Whereto see thou, that it may bear  
its flower.

“ And spake I not too truly, O  
my knights ?  
Was I too dark a prophet when I said  
To those who went upon the Iloly  
Quest,  
That most of them would follow  
wandering firs,  
Lost in the quagmire ?—lost to me  
and gone,  
And left me gazing at a barren board,  
And a lean Order—scarce return'd  
a tithe—  
And out of those to whom the vision  
came  
My greatest hardly will believe he  
saw ;  
Another hath beheld it afar off,  
And leaving human wrongs to right  
themselves,  
Cares but to pass into the silent life.  
And one hath had the vision face to  
face,  
And now his chair desires him here in  
vain,  
However they may crown him other-  
where.

“ And some among you hold, that  
if the King  
Had seen the sight he would have  
sworn the vow :  
Not easily, seeing that the King must  
guard  
That which he rules, and is but as  
the hind  
To whom a space of land is given to  
plough,  
Who may not wander from the  
allotted field,  
Before his work be done ; but, being  
done,  
Let visions of the night or of the day  
Come, as they will ; and many a time  
they come,  
Until this earth he walks on seems not  
earth,  
This light that strikes his eyeball is  
not light, [not air  
This air that smiles his forehead is  
But vision—yea, his very hand and  
foot—  
In moments when he feels he cannot  
die,  
And knows himself no vision to  
himself,  
Nor the high God a vision, nor that  
One  
Who rose again : ye have seen what  
ye have seen.

“ So spake the king : I knew not  
all he meant.”

## PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

KING ARTHUR made new knights to  
fill the gap  
Left by the Holy Quest ; and as he sat  
In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors  
Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these  
a youth,  
Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the  
fields  
Past, and the sunshine came along  
with him.

" Make me thy knight, because I  
know, Sir King,  
All that belongs to knighthood, and I  
love,"  
Such was his cry ; for having heard  
the King  
Had let proclaim a tournament—the  
prize  
A golden circlet and a knightly sword,  
Full fain had Pellicas for his lady won  
The golden circlet, for himself the  
sword :  
And there were those who knew him  
near the King  
And promised for him : and Arthur  
made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of  
the isles—  
But lately come to his inheritance,  
And lord of many a barren isle was  
he—  
Riding at noon, a day or twain before,  
Across the forest call'd of Dean, to  
find  
Caerleon and the King, had felt the  
sun  
Beat like a strong knight on his helm,  
and reel'd  
Almost to falling from his horse ;  
but saw  
Near him a mound of even-sloping  
side,  
Whereon a hundred stately beeches  
grew,

And hero and there great hollies under  
them.  
But for a mile all round was open  
space,  
And fern and heath : and slowly  
Pellicas drew  
To that dim day, then binding his  
good horse  
To a tree, cast himself down ; and as  
he lay  
At random looking over the brown  
earth  
Thro' that green-glooming twilight  
of the grove,  
It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern  
without  
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,  
So that his eyes were dazzled looking  
at it.  
Then o'er it crost the dimness of a  
cloud  
Floating, and once the shadow of a  
bird  
Flying, and then a fawn ; and his  
eyes closed.  
And since he loved all maidens, but  
no maid  
In special, half-awake he whisper'd,  
" Where ?  
O where ? I love thee, tho' I know  
thee not. [vere,  
For fair thou art and pure as Guine-  
And I will make thee with my spear  
and sword  
As famous—O my queen, my Guine-  
vere,  
For I will be thine Arthur when we  
meet."

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of  
talk  
And laughter at the limit of the wood,  
And glancing thro' the hoary boles,  
he saw,  
Strange as to some old prophet might  
have seem'd

A vision hovering on a sea of fire,  
Damsels in divers colours like the  
cloud  
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them  
On horses, and the horses richly  
trapt  
Breast-high in that bright line of  
bracken stood :  
And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,  
And one was pointing this way, and  
one that,  
Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,  
And loosed his horse, and led him to  
the light.  
There she that seem'd the chief  
among them said,  
" In happy time behold our pilot-  
star !  
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we  
ride,  
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the  
knights  
There at Caerleon, but have lost our  
way :  
To right ? to left ? straightforward ?  
back again ?  
Which ? tell us quickly."

And Pelleas gazing thought,  
" Is Guinevere herself so beautiful ? "  
For large her violet eyes look'd, and  
her bloom  
A rosy dawn kindled in stainless  
heavens,  
And round her limbs, mature in  
womanhood,  
And slender was her hand and small  
her shape,  
And but for those large eyes, the  
haunts of scorn,  
She might have seem'd a toy to trifle  
with,  
And pass and care no more. But  
while he gazed  
The beauty of her flesh abash'd the  
boy,  
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul :  
For as the base man, judging of the  
good,  
Puts his own baseness in him by  
default  
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas

All the young beauty of his own soul  
to hers,  
Believing her ; and when she spake  
to him,  
Stammer'd, and could not make her  
a reply.  
For out of the waste islands had he  
come,  
Where saving his own sisters he had  
known  
Scarce any but the women of his  
isles,  
Rough wives, that laugh'd and  
scream'd against the gulls,  
Makers of nets, and living from the  
sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the  
lady round  
And look'd upon her people ; and as  
when  
A stone is flung into some sleeping  
tarn,  
The circle widens till it lip the margo,  
Spread the slow smile thro' all her  
company.  
Three knights were there among ;  
and they too smiled,  
Scorning him ; for the lady was  
Et tarre,  
And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said, " O wild and of the  
woods,  
Knowest thou not the fashion of our  
speech ?  
Or have the Heavens but given thee a  
fair face,  
Lacking a tongue ? "

" O damsel," answer'd he,  
" I woko from dreams ; and coming  
out of gloom  
Was dazzled by the sudden light, and  
crave  
Pardon : but will ye to Caerleon ? I  
Go likewise : shall I lead you to the  
King ?

" Lead then," she said ; and thro'  
the woods they went.  
And while they rode, the meaning  
in his eyes,  
His tenderness of manner, and chaste  
awe,

His broken utterances and bashfulness,  
Were all a burthen to her, and in her heart  
She muiter'd, " I have lighted on a fool,  
Raw, yet so stale ! " But since her mind was bent  
On hearing, after trumpet blown, her name  
And title, " Queen of Beauty," in the lists  
Cried—and beholding him so strong, she thought  
That peradventure he will fight for me,  
And win the circlet: therefore flatter'd him,  
Being so gracious, that he well-nigh deem'd  
His wish by hers was echo'd; and her knights  
And all her damsels, too, were gracious to him,  
For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd Caerleon, ere they past to lodging, she,  
Taking his hand, " O the strong hand," she said, " See ! look at mine ! but wilt thou fight for me,  
And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas, That I may love thee ? "

Then his helpless heart Leapt, and he cried " Ay ! wilt thou if I win ? "  
" Ay, that will I," she answer'd, and she laugh'd, And straitly nipt the hand, and flung it from her ; Then glanced askew at those three knights of hers, Till all her ladies laugh'd along with her.

" O happy world," thought Pelleas, " all, mesoems, Are happy ; I the happiest of them all." Nor slept that night for pleasure in his blood,

And green wood-ways, and eyes among the leaves ; Then being on the morrow knighted, sware To love one only. And as he came away, The men who met him rounded on their heels And wonder'd after him, because his face Shone like the countenance of a priest of old Against the flame about a sacrifice Kindled by fire from heaven : so glad was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets, and strange knights From the four winds came in : and each one sat, Tho' served with choice from air, land, stream, and sea, Oft in mid-banquet measuring with his eyes His neighbour's make and might : and Pelleas look'd Noble among the noble, for he dream'd His lady loved him, and he knew himself Loved of the King : and him his new-made knight Worshipt, whose lightest whisper moved him more Than all the ranged reasons of the world.

Then blush'd and brake the morning of the jousts, And this was call'd " The Tournament of Youth " : For Arthur, loving his young knight, withheld His older and his mightier from the lists, That Pelleas might obtain his lady's love, According to her promise, and remain Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had the jousts Down in the flat field by the shore of Usk Holden : the gilded parapets were crown'd

With faces, and the great tower fill'd  
with eyes  
Up to the summit, and the trumpets  
blew.  
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept  
the field  
With honour : so by that strong hand  
of his  
The sword and golden circlet were  
achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady  
loved : the heat  
Of pride and glory fired her face ; her  
eye  
Sparkled ; she caught the circlet  
from his lance,  
And there before the people crown'd  
herself :  
So for the last time she was gracious  
to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space—her  
look  
Bright for all others, cloudier on her  
knight—  
Linger'd Ettarre : and seeing Pelleas  
droop,  
Said Guinevere, " We marvel at thee  
much,  
O damsel, wearing this unsunny face  
To him who won thee glory ! " And  
she said,  
" Had ye not held your Lancelot in  
your bower,  
My Queen, he had not won." Where-  
at the Queen,  
As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,  
Glanced down upon her, turn'd and  
went her way.

But after, when her damsels, and  
herself,  
And those three knights all set their  
faces home,  
Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw  
him cried,  
" Damsels—and yet I should be  
shamed to say it—  
I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him  
back  
Among yourselves. Would rather  
that we had  
Some rough old knight who knew the  
worldly way,

Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride  
And jest with : take him to you, keep  
him off,  
And pamper him with papmeat, if ye  
will,  
Old milky fables of the wolf and  
sheep,  
Such as the wholesome mothers tell  
their boys.  
Nay, should ye try him with a merry  
one  
To find his mettle, good : and if he  
fly us,  
Small matter ! let him." This her  
damsels heard,  
And mindful of her small and cruel  
hand,  
They, closing round him thro' the  
journey home,  
Acted her hest, and always from her  
side  
Restrain'd him with all manner of  
device,  
So that he could not come to speech  
with her.  
And when she gain'd her castle,  
upsprang the bridge,  
Down rang the grate of iron thro' the  
groove,  
And he was left alone in open field.  
" These be the ways of ladies,"  
Pelleas thought,  
" To those who love them, trials of our  
faith.  
Yea, let her prove me to the utter-  
most,  
For loyal to the uttermost am I."  
So made his moan ; and, darkness  
falling, sought  
A priory not far off, there lodged, but  
rose  
With morning every day, and, moist  
or dry,  
Full-arm'd upon his charger all day  
long  
Sat by the walls, and no one open'd  
to him.  
And this persistence turn'd her  
scorn to wrath.  
Then calling her three knights, she  
charged them, " Out !  
And drive him from the walls." And  
out they came,

But Pelcas overthrew them as they dash'd  
Against him one by one ; and these return'd,  
But still he kept his watch beneath the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate ; and once,  
A week beyond, while walking on the walls  
With her three knights, she pointed downward, "Look,  
He haunts me—I cannot breathe—besieges me ;  
Down ! strike him ! put my hate into your strokes,  
And drive him from my walls." And down they went,  
And Pelcas overthrew them one by one ;  
And from the tower above him cried Ettarre,  
"Bind him, and bring him in."

He heard her voice ;  
Then let the strong hand, which had overthrown  
Her minion-knights, by those he overthrew  
Be bounden straight, and so they brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre, the sight  
Of her rich beauty made him at one glance  
More bondsman in his heart than in his bonds.  
Yet with good cheer he spake, "Behold me, Lady,  
A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will ;  
And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,  
Content am I so that I see thy face  
But once a day : for I have sworn my vows,  
And thou hast given thy promise, and I know  
That all these pains are trials of my faith,  
And that thyself when thou hast seen me strain'd

And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length  
Yield me thy love and know me for thy knight."

Then she began to rail so bitterly,  
With all her damsels, he was stricken mute ;  
But when she mock'd his vows and the great King,  
Lighted on words : " For pity of thine own self,  
Peace, Lady, peace : is he not thine and mine ? "  
" Thou fool," she said, " I never heard his voice  
But long'd to break away. Unbind him now,  
And thrust him out of doors ; for save he be  
Fool to the midmost marrow of his bones,  
He will return no more." And those, her three,  
Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again  
She call'd them, saying, " There he watches yet,  
There like a dog before his master's door !  
Kick'd, he returns : do ye not hate him, ye ?  
Ye know yourselves : how can ye bide at peace,  
Affronted with his fulsome innocence ?  
Are ye but creatures of the board and bed,  
No men to strike ? Fall on him all at once,  
And if ye slay him I reck not : if ye fail,  
Give ye the slave mine order to be bound,  
Bind him as heretofore, and bring him in :  
It may be ye shall slay him in his bonds."

She spake ; and at her will they couch'd their spears,  
Three against one : and Gawain passing by,

Bound upon solitary adventure, saw  
Low down beneath the shadow of  
those towers  
A villainy, three to one : and thro'  
his heart  
The fire of honour and all noble deeds  
Flash'd, and he call'd, " I strike  
upon thy side—  
The caitiffs ! " " Nay," said Pelleas,  
" but forbear ;  
He needs no aid who doth his lady's  
will."

So Gawain, looking at the villainy  
done,  
Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness  
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog,  
withheld  
A moment from the vermin that he  
sees  
Before him, shivers, ere he springs,  
and kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to  
three ;  
And they rose up, and bound, and  
brought him in.  
Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,  
burn'd  
Full on her knights in many an evil  
name  
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-  
beaten hound :  
" Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit  
to touch,  
Far less to bind, your victor, and  
thrust him out,  
And let who will release him from his  
bonds.  
And if he comes again"—there she  
brake short ;  
And Pelleas answer'd, " Lady, for  
indeed  
I loved you and I deem'd you beauti-  
ful,  
I cannot brook to see your beauty  
marr'd  
Thro' evil spite : and if ye love me  
not,  
I cannot bear to dream you so for-  
sworn :  
I had liefer ye were worthy of my  
love,  
Than to be loved again of you—  
farewell ;

And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my  
love,  
Vex not yourself : ye will not see me  
more."

While thus he spake, she gazed  
upon the man  
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds,  
and thought,  
" Why have I push'd him from me ?  
this man loves,  
If love there be : yet him I loved not.  
Why ?  
I deem'd him fool ? yea, so ? or that  
in him  
A something—was it nobler than  
myself ?—  
Seem'd my reproach ? He is not of  
my kind.  
He could not love me, did he know  
me well.  
Nay, let him go—and quickly." And  
her knights  
Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden  
out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed  
him from his bonds,  
And flung them o'er the walls ; and  
afterward,  
Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's  
rag,  
" Faith of my body," he said, " and  
art thou not—  
Yea thou art he, whom late our  
Arthur made  
Knight of his table ; yea and he that  
won  
The circlet ? wherefore hast thou so  
defamed  
Thy brotherhood in me and all the  
rest,  
As let these caitiffs on thee work their  
will ? "

And Pelleas answer'd, " O, their  
wills are hers  
For whom I won the circlet ; and  
mine, hers,  
Thus to be bounden, so to see her  
face,  
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and  
mockery now,  
Other than when I found her in the  
woods ;

And tho' she hath me bounden but  
in spite,  
And all to flout me, when they bring  
me in,  
Let me be bounden, I shall see her  
face;  
Else must I die thro' mine unhappi-  
ness."

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho'  
in scorn,  
" Why, let my lady bind me if she  
will,  
And let my lady beat me if she will:  
But an she send her delegate to thrall  
These fighting hands of mine—Christ  
kill me then  
But I will slice him handless by the  
wrist,  
And let my lady scar the stump for  
him,  
Howl as he may. But hold me for  
your friend:  
Come, ye know nothing: here I  
pledge my troth,  
Yea, by the honour of the Table  
Round,  
I will be leal to thee and work thy  
work,  
And tame thy jailing princess to thine  
hand.  
Lend me thine horse and arms, and I  
will say  
That I have slain thee. She will let  
me in  
To hear the manner of thy fight and  
fall;  
Then, when I come within her coun-  
sels, then  
From prime to vespers will I chant  
thy praise  
As prowrest knight and truest lover,  
more  
Than any have sung thee living, till  
she long  
To have theo back in lusty life again,  
Not to be bound, save by white bonds  
and warm,  
Dearer than freedom. Wherefore  
now thy horse  
And armour: let me go: be com-  
forted:  
Give me three days to melt her fancy,  
and hope

The third night hence will bring thee  
news of gold."

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all  
his arms,  
Saving the goodly sword, his prize,  
and took  
Gawain's, and said " Betray me not,  
but help—  
Art thou not he whom men call  
light-of-love? "

" Ay," said Gawain, " for  
women be so light."  
Then bounded forward to the castle  
walls,  
And raised a bugle hanging from his  
neck,  
And winded it, and that so musically  
That all the old echoes hidden in the  
wall  
Rang out like hollow woods at  
huntingtide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the  
tower;  
" Avaunt," they cried, " our lady  
loves thee not."  
But Gawain lifting up his visor said,  
" Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's  
court,  
And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye  
hate:  
Behold his horse and armour. Open  
gate,  
And I will make you merry."

And down they ran,  
Her damsels, crying to their lady,  
" Lo!  
Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that  
hath  
His horse and armour: will ye let  
him in?  
He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of the  
court,  
Sir Gawain—there he waits below  
the wall,  
Blowing his bugle as who should say  
him nay."

And so, leave given, straight on  
thro' open door  
Rode Gawain, whom she greeted  
courteously.

"Dead, is it so?" she ask'd. "Ay, ay," said he,  
 "And oft in dying cried upon your name."  
 "Pity on him," she answer'd, "a good knight,  
 But never let me bide one hour at peace."  
 "Ay," thought Gawain, "and ye be fair now:  
 But I to your dead man have given my troth,  
 That whom ye loathe him will I make you love."

So those three days, aimless about the land,  
 Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering waited, until the third night brought a moon  
 With promise of large light on woods and ways.

The night was hot: he could not rest, but rode  
 Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his horse  
 Hard by the gates. Wide open were the gates,  
 And no watch kept; and in thro' these he past,  
 And heard but his own steps, and his own heart [own self,  
 Beating, for nothing moved but his And his own shadow. Then he crost the court,  
 And saw the postern portal also wide Yawning; and up a slope of garden, all  
 Of roses white and red, and wild ones mixt  
 And overgrowing them, went on, and found, Here, too, all hush'd below the mellow moon,  
 Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave Came lightening downward, and so spilt itself Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware that white pavilions rose,  
 Three from the bushes, gilden-peakt: in one,

Red after revel, droned her lurdane knights  
 Slumbering, and their three squires across their feet:  
 In one, their malice on the placid lip  
 Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her damsels lay:  
 And in the third, the circlet of the jousts  
 Bound on her brow, were Gawain and Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the leaf  
 To find a nest and feels a snake, ne diew:  
 Back, as a coward slinks from what he fears [hound  
 To cope with, or a traitor proven, or Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame Creep with his shadow thro' the court again,  
 Fingering at his sword-handle until he stood  
 There on the castle-bridge once more, and thought,  
 "I will go back, and slay them where they lie."

And so went back and seeing them yet in sleep Said, "Ye, that so dishallow the holy sleep,  
 Your sleep is death," and drew the sword, and thought,  
 "What! slay a sleeping knight? the King hath bound  
 And sworn me to this brotherhood"; again,  
 "Alas that ever a knight should be so false."  
 Then turn'd, and so return'd, and groaning laid The naked sword athwart their naked throats,  
 There left it, and them sleeping; and she lay, The circlet of the tourney round her brows,  
 And the sword of the tourney across her throat.  
 And forth he past, and mounting on his horse

Stared at her towers that, larger than themselves  
 In their own darkness, throng'd into the moon.  
 Then crush'd the saddle with his thighs, and clench'd his hands, and madden'd with himself and moan'd :

" Would they have risen against me in their blood  
 At the last day ? I might have answer'd them  
 Even before high God. O towers so strong,  
 Huge, solid, would that even while I gaze  
 The crack of earthquake shivering to your base  
 Split you, and Hell burst up your harlot roofs  
 Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and thro' within,  
 Black as the harlot's heart—hollow as a skull !  
 Let the fierce east scream thro' your cyclet-holes,  
 And whirl the dust of harlots round and round  
 In dung and nettles ! hiss, snake—I saw him there—  
 Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell.  
 Who yells  
 Here in the still sweet summer night, but I—  
 I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd her fool ?  
 Fool, beast—he, she, or I ? myself most fool ;  
 Beast, too, as lacking human wit—disgraced,  
 Dishonour'd all for trial of true love—  
 Love ?—we be all alike : only the king  
 Hath made us fools and liars. O noble vows !  
 O great and sane and simple race of brutes  
 That own no lust because they have no law !  
 For why should I have loved her to my shame ?  
 I loathe her, as I loved her to my shame.

I never loved her, I but lusted for her—  
 Away—  
 He dash'd the rowel into his horse,  
 And bounded forth and vanish'd thro' the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch on her throat,  
 Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd herself  
 To Gawain : " Liar, for thou hast not slain  
 This Pelleas ! here he stood and might have slain  
 Me and thyself." And he that tells the tale  
 Says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd  
 To Pelleas, as the one true knight on earth,  
 And only lover ; and thro' her love her life  
 Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain.

But he by wild and way, for half the night,  
 And over hard and soft, striking the sod  
 From out the soft, the spark from off the hard,  
 Rode till the star above the wakening sun,  
 Beside that tower where Percivale was cowld,  
 Glanced from the rosy forehead of the dawn. [heart  
 For so the words were flash'd into his He knew not whence or wherefore :  
 " O sweet star,  
 Pure on the virgin forehead of the dawn."  
 And there he would have wept, but felt his eyes  
 Harder and drier than a fountain bed  
 In summer : thither came the village girls  
 And linger'd talking, and they come no more  
 Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it from the heights  
 Again with living waters in the change

Of seasons : hard his eyes ; harder  
his heart  
Seem'd ; but so weary were his limbs,  
that he,  
Gasping, " Of Arthur's hall am I,  
but here,  
Here let me rest and die," cast himself  
down,  
And gulph'd his griefs in inmost  
sleop ; so lay,  
Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain  
fired  
The hall of Merlin, and the morning  
star  
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame,  
and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some  
one nigh,  
Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,  
crying  
" False ! and I held thee pure as  
Guinevere."

But Percivale stood near him and  
replied,  
" Am I but false as Guinevere is  
pure ?  
Or art thou mazed with dreams ?  
or being one  
Of our free-spoken Table hast not  
heard  
That Lancelot"—there he check'd  
himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as  
with one  
Who gets a wound in battle, and the  
sword  
That made it plunges thro' the wound  
again,  
And pricks it deeper : and he shrank  
and wail'd,  
" Is the Queen false ? " and Perci-  
vale was mute.  
" Have any of our Round Table held  
their vows ? "  
And Percivale made answer not a  
word.  
" Is the king true ? " " The king ! "  
said Percivale.  
" Why then let men couple at once  
with wolves.  
What ! art thou mad ? "

But Pelleas, leaping up,  
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on  
his horse  
And fled : small pity upon his horse  
had he,  
Or on himself, or any, and when he  
met  
A cripple, one that held a hand for  
alms—  
Hunch'd as he was, and like an old  
dwarf-clm  
That turns its back on the salt blast,  
the hoy  
Paused not but overrode him, shout-  
ing " False,  
And false with Gawain ! " and so left  
him bruised  
And batter'd, and fled on, and hill  
and wood  
Went ever streaming by him till the  
gloom,  
That follows on the turning of the  
world,  
Darkon'd the common path : he  
twitch'd the reins,  
And made his boast that better knew  
it, swerv'r [saw  
Now off it and now on ; but when he  
High up in heaven the hall that  
Merlin built,  
Blackening against the dead-green  
stripes of even,  
" Black nest of rats," he groan'd,  
" ye build too high."

Not long thereafter from the city  
gates  
Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,  
Warm with a gracious parting from  
the Queen,  
Peace at his heart, and gazing at a  
star  
And marvelling what it was : on  
whom the boy,  
Across the silent seeded meadow-  
grass  
Borne, clash'd : and Lancelot, saying,  
" What name hast thou  
That ridest here so blindly and so  
hard ? "  
" I have no name," he shouted, " a  
scourge am I,  
To lash the treasons of the Table  
Round."

"Yea, but thy name?" "I have many names," he cried : "I am wrath and shame and hate and evil fame, And like a poisonous wind I pass to blast And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the Queen."

"First over me," said Lancelot, "shalt thou pass?" "Fight therefore," yell'd the other, and either knight Drew back a space, and when they closed, at once The weary steed of Pelleas floundering flung His rider, who called out from the dark field, "Thou art false as Hell: slay me: I have no sword."

Then Lancelot, "Yea, between thy lips—and sharp; But here will I disedge it by thy death."

"Slay then," he shriek'd, "my will is to be slain."

And Lancelot, with his heel upon the fall'n, Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then spake : "Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say thy say."

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-horse back To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark field, And follow'd to the city. It chanced that both Brake into hall together, worn and pale.

There with her knights and dames was Guinevere. Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas, him Who had not greeted her, but cast himself Down on a bench, hard-breathing. "Havo ye fought?" She ask'd of Lancelot. "Ay, my Queen," he said. "And thou hast overthrown him?" "Ay, my Queen."

Then she, turning to Pelleas, "O young knight, Hath the great heart of knighthood in thee fail'd So far thou canst not bide, unfrowardly, A fall from him?" Then, for he answer'd not, "Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the Queen, May help them, loose thy tongue, and let me know."

But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce She quail'd; and he, hissing "I have no sword," Sprang from the door into the dark. The Queen Look'd hard upon her lover, he on her; And each foresaw the dolorous day to be: And all talk died, as in a grove all song Beneath the shadow of some bird of prey: Then a long silence came upon the hall, And Modred thought, "The time is hard at hand."

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,  
First made and latest left of all the  
knights,  
Told, when the man was no more than  
a voice  
In the white winter of his age, to  
those  
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other  
minds.

Before that last weird battle in the  
west  
There came on Arthur sleeping,  
Gawain kill'd  
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of  
Gawain blown  
Along a wandering wind, and past his  
ear  
Went shrilling "Hollow, hollow all  
delight!"  
Hail, king! to-morrow thou shalt pass  
away.  
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for  
thee.  
And I am blown along a wandering  
wind,  
And hollow, hollow, hollow all de-  
light."  
And fainter onward, like wild birds  
that change  
Their season in the night and wail  
their way  
From cloud to cloud, down the long  
wind the dream  
Shrill'd; but in going mingled with  
dim cries  
Far in the moonlit haze among the  
hills,  
As of some lonely city sack'd by  
night,  
When all is lost, and wife and child  
with wail  
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke  
and call'd,

"Who spake? A dream. O light  
upon the wind,  
Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are  
these dim cries  
Thine? or doth all that haunts the  
waste and wild  
Mourn, knowing it will go along with  
me? "

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere  
and spake:  
"O me, my king, let pass whatever  
will,  
Elves, and the harmless glamour of  
the field;  
But in their stead thy name and glory  
cling  
To all high places like a golden cloud  
For ever: but as yet thou shalt not  
pass.  
Light was Gawain in life, and light in  
death  
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;  
And care not thou for dreams from  
him, but rise—  
I hear the steps of Modred in the west,  
And with him many of thy people,  
and knights  
Once thine, whom thou hast loved,  
but grosser grown  
Than heathen, spitting at their vows  
and thee.  
Right well in heart they know thee  
for the King.  
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
Bedivere:  
"Far other is this battle in the west  
Whereto we move, than when we  
strode in youth,  
And thrust the heathen from the  
Roman wall,  
And shook him thro' the north. Ill  
doom is mine

To war against my people and my  
knights.  
The king who fights his people fights  
himself.  
And they my knights, who loved me  
once, the stroke  
That strikes them dead is as my  
death to me.  
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a  
way  
Thro' this blind haze, which ever  
since I saw  
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,  
Hath folded in the passes of the  
world."

Then rose the King and moved his  
host by night,  
And over push'd Sir Modred, league  
by league,  
Back to the sunset bound of Lyon-  
ness—  
A land of old upheaven from the  
abyss  
By fire, to sink into the abyss again ;  
Where fragments of forgotten peoples  
dwelt,  
And the long mountains ended in a  
coast  
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away  
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.  
There the pursuer could pursue no  
more,  
And he that fled no further fly the  
King ;  
And there, that day when the great  
light of heaven [year,  
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling  
On the waste sand by the waste sea  
they closed.  
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a  
fight  
Like this last, dim, weird battle of  
the west.  
A deathwhite mist slept over sand  
and sea ;  
Whereof the chill, to him who  
breathed it, drew  
Down with his blood, till all his  
heart was cold  
With formless fear ; and ev'n on  
Arthur fell  
Confusion, since he saw not whom he  
fought,

For friend and foe were shadows in  
the mist,  
And friend slow friend not knowing  
whom he slew ;  
And some had visions out of golden  
youth,  
And some beheld the faces of old  
ghosts  
Look in upon the battle ; and in the  
mist  
Was many a noble deed, many a base,  
And chance and craft and strength  
in single fights,  
And ever and anon with host to host  
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the  
hard mail hewn,  
Shield-breakings, and the clash of  
brands, the crash  
Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms,  
and shrieks [down  
After the Christ, of those who falling  
Looked up for heaven, and only saw  
the mist ;  
And shouts of heathen and the  
traitor knights,  
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous  
blasphemies,  
Sweat, writhings, anguish, labouring  
of the lungs  
In that close mist, and cryings for  
the light,  
Moans of the dying, and voices of the  
dead.  
Last, as by some one deathbed after  
wall  
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro'  
death  
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all  
that shore,  
Save for some whisper of the seething  
seas,  
A dead hush fell ; but when the  
dolorous day  
Grew drearier toward twilight falling,  
came  
A bitter wind, clear from the North,  
and blew  
The mist aside, and with that wind  
the tide  
Rose, and the pale king glanced  
across the field  
Of battle : but no man was moving  
there ;

Nor any cry of Christian heard  
thercon,  
Nor yet of heathen ; only the wan  
wave  
Brake in among dead faces, to and  
fro  
Swaying the helpless hands, and up  
and down  
Tumbling the hollow helmets, of the  
fallen,  
And shiver'd brands that once had  
fought with Rome,  
And rolling far along the gloomy  
shores  
The voice of days of old and days to  
be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
Bedivere,  
And whiter than the mist that all day  
long  
Had held the field of battle was the  
King :

" Hearest thou this great voice that  
shakes the world,  
And wastes the narrow realm where-  
on we move,  
And beats upon the faces of the dead,  
My dead, as tho' they had not died  
for me ?—

O Bedivore, for on my heart hath  
fall'n  
Confusion, till I know not what I  
am,  
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be  
king.  
Behold, I seem but king among the  
dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivore :  
" My King,  
King everywhere ! and so the dead  
have kings,  
There also will I worship thee as  
king.  
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I  
live  
Who love thee ; but who hates thee,  
he that brought  
The heathen back among us, yonder  
stands,  
Modred, unharmed, the traitor of  
thine house."

Then spake the King : " My house  
hath been my doom.  
But call not thou this traitor of my  
house  
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof  
with me.  
My house are rather they who sware  
my vows,  
Yea, even while they brake them,  
own'd me king.  
And well for thee, saying in my dark  
hour,  
Whon all the purport of my throne  
hath fail'd,  
That quick or dead thou holdest me  
for king.  
King am I, whatsoever be their cry ;  
And one last act of kinghood shalt  
thou see  
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this  
the king  
Mado at the man ; then Modred  
smote his liege  
Hard on that helm which many a  
heathen sword  
Had beaten thin ; while Arthur at  
one blow, [bur,  
Striking the last stroke with Excali-  
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he  
fell.

So all day long the noise of battle  
roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter  
sca ;  
Until King Arthur's Table, man by  
man,  
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their  
lord,  
King Arthur. Then, because his  
wound was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivore uplifted him,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the  
field,  
A broken chancel with a broken  
cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren  
land :  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was  
full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
Bedivere :

"The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous  
knights

Whereof this world holds record.

Such a sleep

They sleep—the men I loved. I  
think that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of  
knightly deeds,  
Walking about the gardens and the  
halls

Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I  
made,—  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
again  
To rule once more; but let what  
will be, be.

I am so deeply smitten thro' the  
helm  
That without help I cannot last till  
morn.

Thou therefore take my brand Ex-  
calibur,  
Which was my pride: for thou  
rememberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon,  
an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the  
lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic,  
wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I row'd  
across

And took it, and have worn it, like a  
king;

And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known:  
But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle  
mere:

Watch what thou seest, and lightly  
bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere:

"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave  
thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the  
helm—

A little thing may harm a wounded  
man;  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,

Watch what I see, and lightly bring  
thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine  
he stept,  
And in the moon athwart the place  
of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-  
wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
stepping down  
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed  
rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the  
lake.

There drew he forth the brand  
Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter  
moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
ran forth  
And spangled keen with frost against  
the hilt;  
For all the haft twinkled with dia-  
mond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-  
work  
Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so  
long  
That both his eyes were dazzled as he  
stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift  
mind,  
In act to throw: but at the last it  
seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted water-  
flags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the  
marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
Bedivere:  
"Hast thou perform'd my mission  
which I gave?  
What is it thou hast seen? or what  
hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere !

" I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :  
" Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as be seem'd,  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :  
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere,  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ; [hilt,  
But when he saw the wonder of the How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud :

" And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
What good should follow this, if this were done ?  
What harm, undone ? Deep harm to disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule. Were it well to obey then, if a king demand

An act unprofitable, against himself ?  
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt ? But were this kept,  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, " King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the doeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills." So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence. But now much honour and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time, And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :  
" What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
" I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :  
" Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me ! Authority forgets a dying king, Laid widow'd of the power in his eye That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,  
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights  
In whom should meet the offices of all,

Thou wouldest betray me for the precious hilt ;  
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes. Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice, And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :  
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur, I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
 Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,  
 And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand  
 Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,  
 And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,  
 Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
 Seen where the moving isles of winter shock  
 By night, with noises of the northern sea. [calibur :  
 So flash'd and fell the brand Ex-  
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
 And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :  
 " Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
 Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
 " Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt. Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;  
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
 That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere."  
 And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :  
 " My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone,  
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
 And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear  
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
 And would have spoken, but he found not words ;  
 Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
 O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
 And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
 Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
 When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear  
 " Quick, quick !  
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die."  
 But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking,  
 as he walk'd,  
 Larger than human on the frozen  
 hills.  
 He heard the deep behind him, and a  
 cry  
 Before. His own thought drove him  
 like a goad.  
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy  
 caves  
 And barren chasms, and all to left  
 and right  
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him,  
 as he based  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that  
 rang  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed  
 heels—  
 And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
 And the long glories of the winter  
 moon.

Then saw they how there hove a  
 dusky barge,  
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to  
 stern,  
 Beneath them ; and descending  
 they were ware  
 That all the decks were dense with  
 stately forms,  
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a  
 dream—by these  
 Three Queens with crowns of gold :  
 and from them rose  
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling  
 stars,  
 And, as it were one voice, an agony  
 Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills  
 All night in a waste land, where no  
 one comes.  
 Or hath come, since the making of  
 the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, " Place  
 me in the barge " ;  
 So to the barge they came. There  
 those three Queens  
 Put forth their hands, and took the  
 King, and wept.  
 But she, that rose the tallest of them  
 all  
 And fairest, laid his head upon her  
 lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
 chafed his hands,  
 And call'd him by his name, com-  
 plaining loud,  
 And dropping bitter tears against his  
 brow  
 Striped with dark blood : for all his  
 face was white  
 And colourless, and like the wither'd  
 moon  
 Smote by the fresh beam of the  
 springing east ;  
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd  
 with drops  
 Of onset ; and the light and lustrous  
 curls—  
 That made his forehead like a rising  
 sun  
 High from the dais-throne—were  
 parch'd with dust ;  
 Or, clotted into points and hanging  
 loose,  
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
 fringed his lips.  
 So like a shatter'd column lay the  
 King ;  
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance  
 in rest,  
 From spur to plume a star of tourna-  
 ment,  
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and  
 charged  
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir  
 Bedivere :  
 " Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither  
 shall I go ?  
 Where shall I hide my forehead and  
 my eyes ?  
 For now I see the true old times are  
 dead,  
 When every morning brought a  
 noble chance,  
 And every chance brought out a noble  
 knight.  
 Such times have been not since the  
 light that led  
 The holy Elders with the gift of  
 myrrh.  
 But now the whole Round Table is  
 dissolved  
 Which was an image of the mighty  
 world ;

And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge :  
" The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?  
I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within Himself make pure ! but thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats [brain,  
That nourish a blind life within the If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend ? [way  
For so the whole round earth is every Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou scëst—if indeed I go (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)—  
To the island-valley of Avilion ; Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with sunnier sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
And on the more the wailing died away.

At length he groan'd, and turning slowly climb  
The last hard footstep of that iron crag ;  
Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried,  
" He passes to be king among the dead,  
And after healing of his grievous wound  
He comes again ; but—if he come no more—  
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black boat,  
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed  
On that high day, when, clothed with living light,  
They stood before his throne in silence, friends  
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need ? "

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint  
As from beyond the limit of the world,  
Like the last echo born of a great cry,  
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice  
Around a king returning from his wars.  
Thereat once more he moved about, and climb  
E'en to the highest he could climb, and saw,

Straining his eyes beneath an arch  
of hand,  
Or thought he saw, the speck that  
bare the king,  
Down that long water opening on the  
deep

Somewhere far off, pass on and on,  
and go  
From less to less and vanish into  
light.  
And the new sun rose bringing the  
new year.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### NORTHERN FARMER NEW STYLE

I  
DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as  
they canters awaäy?  
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's  
what I 'cars 'em saäy.  
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam,  
thou's an ass for thy paains :  
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor  
in all thy braains.

II  
Woä—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha,  
Sam : yon's parson's 'ouse—  
Dosen't thou know that a man mun be  
cäther a man or a mouse?  
Time to think on it then ; for thou'll  
be twenty to wesäk.<sup>1</sup>  
Proputty, proputty—woä then woä  
—let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

III  
Me an' thy murther, Sammy, 'as beän  
a-talkin' o' thee ;  
Thou's been talkin' to murther, an'  
she beän a tellin' it me.  
Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's  
sweet upo' parson's lass—  
Noä—thou'll marry fur luvv—an' we  
boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

IV  
Seed'd her todaäy goä by—Saäint's-  
daäy—they was ringing the bells.

She's a beauty thou thinks—an' soä  
is scoors o' gells,  
Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a  
beauty?—the flower as blaws.  
But proputty, proputty sticks, an'  
proputty, proputty graws.

V  
Do'ant be stunt<sup>2</sup> : taäke time : I  
knows what maäkes tha sa mad.  
Warn't I craäzid fur the lasses mysén  
when I wur a lad?  
But I knaw'd a Quääker feller as  
often 'as towd ma this :  
" Doänt thou marry for munny, but  
goä wheer munny is!"

VI  
An' I went wheer munny war : an'  
thy mother coom to 'and,  
Wi' lots o' munny laaid by, an' a  
nicetish bit o' land.  
Maäybo she warn't a beauty :—I never  
giv it a thowt—  
But warn't she as good to cuddle an'  
kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

VII  
Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' sh-  
weänt 'a nowt when 'e's déad,  
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut,  
and addle<sup>3</sup> her bread :  
Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an'  
weänt nirv git naw 'igher ;  
An' 'c maäde the bed as 'e ligs on  
afoor 'e coom'd to the shire.

<sup>1</sup> This week.

<sup>2</sup> Obstinate.

<sup>3</sup> Earn.

## VIII

And thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi'  
lots o' Varsity debt,  
Stook to his taail they did, an' 'e 'ant  
got shut on 'em yet.  
An' 'e ligg on 'is back i' the grip, wi'  
noän to lend 'im a shove,  
Woorse nor a far-welter'd<sup>1</sup> yowe: fur,  
Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

## IX

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv  
thy lass an' er munny too,  
Maakin' 'em goä together as they've  
good right to do.  
Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause  
o' er munny laaifd by?  
Naäy—fur I luvv'd er a vast sight  
moor fur it: reison why.

## X

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants  
to marry the lass,  
Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we  
boäth on us thinks tha an ass.  
Woä then, propputy, wiltha?<sup>2</sup>—an ass  
as near as mays nowt—<sup>3</sup>  
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!—the  
bees is as fell as owt.<sup>3</sup>

## XI

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'efüd,  
lad, out o' the fence!  
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman  
burn? is it shillings an' pence?  
Propputy, propputy's ivrything 'ere,  
an', Sammy, I'm blöst  
If it isn't the saüme cop yonder, fur  
them as 'as it's the best.

## XII

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks  
into 'ouses an' steäls,  
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an'  
taäkes their regular meäls.  
Noä, but it's them as niver knows  
wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.  
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the  
poor in a loomp is bad.

## XIII

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun  
'a beän a laäzy lot,

<sup>1</sup> Or fow-welter'd—said of a sheep lying on its back in the furrow.

<sup>2</sup> Makes nothing.

<sup>3</sup> The flies are as fierce as anything.

Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin'  
whiniver munny was got.  
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leäsa  
waays 'is munny was 'id.  
But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd,  
an' 'e died a good un, 'e did.

## XIV

Look thou theer wheer Wrigglesby  
beck comes out by the 'ill!  
Feyther run up to the farm, an' I runs  
up to the mill;  
An' I'll run up to the brig, an' that  
thou'll live to see;  
And if thou marries a good un I'll  
leäve the land to thee.

## XV

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheer-  
by I means to stick;  
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll  
leäve the land to Dick.—  
Coom cop, propputy, propputy—  
that's what I 'ears 'im say—  
Propputy, propputy, propputy—  
carter an' canter awaäy.

## THE GOLDEN SUPPER

[This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio.]

A young lover, Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavours to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel of it. He speaks of having been haunted in delirium by visions and the sound of bells, sometimes tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the event, and a witness to it completes the tale.]

\* \* \*

He flies the event: he leaves the  
event to me:  
Poor Julian—how he rush'd away;  
the bells,  
Those marriage bells, echoing in ear  
and heart—  
But cast a parting glance at me,  
you saw,  
As who should say "continue."  
Well, he had  
One golden hour—of triumph shall I  
say?  
Solace at least—before he left his  
home.

Would you had seen him in that  
hour of his!

He moved thro' all of it majestically—  
Restrain'd himself quite to the close  
—but now—

Whether they *were* his lady's  
marriage-bells,  
Or prophets of them in his fantasy,  
I never ask'd: but Lionel and the  
girl  
Were wedded, and our Julian came  
again  
Back to his mother's house among  
the pines.  
But these, their gloom, the mountains  
and the Bay,  
The whole land weigh'd him down  
as *Mina* does  
The Giant of Mythology: he would  
go,  
Would leave the land for ever, and  
had gone  
Surely, but for a whisper "Go not  
yet,"  
Some warning, and divinely as it  
seem'd  
By that which follow'd—but of this I  
deem  
As of the visions that he told—the  
event [life,  
Glanced back upon them in his after  
And partly made them—tho' he  
knew it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not  
look at her—  
No not for months: but, when the  
eleventh moon  
After their marriage lit the lover's  
Bay,  
Heard yet once more the tolling bell,  
and said,  
Would you could toll me out of life,  
but found—  
All softly as his mother broke it to  
him—  
A crueler reason than a crazy ear,  
For that low knell tolling his lady  
dead—  
Dead—and had lain three days with-  
out a pulse:  
All that look'd on her had pronounced  
her dead.  
And so they bore her (for in Julian's  
land

They never nail a dumb head up in  
alm),  
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of  
heaven,  
And laid her in the vault of her own  
kin.

What did he then? not die: he is  
here and halo—  
Not plunge head foremost from the  
mountain there,  
And leave the name of Lover's Leap:  
not he:  
He knew the meaning of the whisper  
now,  
Thought that he knew it. "This, I  
stay'd for this;  
O love, I have not seen you for so  
long.  
Now, now, will I go down into the  
grave,  
I will be all alone with all I love,  
And kiss her on the lips. She is no  
more:  
The dead returns to me, and I go  
down  
To kiss the dead."

The fancy stirr'd him so  
He rose and went, and entering the  
dim vault,  
And, making there a sudden light,  
beheld  
All round about him that which all  
will be.  
The light was but a flash, and went  
again.  
Then at the far end of the vault he  
saw [face;  
His lady with the moonlight on her  
Her breast as in a shadow-prison,  
bars  
Of black and bands of silver, which  
the moon  
Struck from an open grating over-  
head  
High in the wall, and all the rest of her  
Drown'd in the gloom and horror of  
the vault.

"It was my wish," he said, "to  
pass, to sleep,  
To rest, to be with her—till the great  
day

Peal'd on us with that music which rights all,  
And raised us hand in hand." And kneeling there  
Down in the dreadful dust that once was man,  
Dust, as he said, that once was loving hearts,  
Hearts that had beat with such a love as mine—  
Not such as mine, no, nor for such as her—  
He softly put his arm about her neck  
And kiss'd her more than once, till helpless death  
And silence made him bold—nay, but I wrong him,  
He reverenced his dear lady even in death;  
But, placing his true hand upon her heart,  
"O, you warm heart," he moan'd, "not even death  
Can chill you all at once": then starting, thought  
His dreams had come again. "Do I wake or sleep?  
Or am I made immortal, or my love  
Mortal once more?" It beat—the heart—it beat:  
Faint—but it beat: at which his own began  
To pulse with such a vehomence that it drown'd  
The feebler motion underneath his hand.  
But when at last his doubts were satisfied, [chre,  
He raised her softly from the sepulchre, And, wrapping her all over with the cloak  
He came in, and now striding fast, and now  
Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore  
Holding his golden burthen in his arms,  
So bore her thro' the solitary land  
Back to the mother's house where she was born.  
There the good mother's kindly ministering,  
With half a night's appliances, recall'd

Her fluttering life: she raised an eye that ask'd  
"Where?" till the things familiar to her youth  
Had made a silent answer: then she spoke,  
"Here! and how came I here?" and learning it  
(They told her somewhat rashly as I think)  
At once began to wander and to wail,  
"Ay, but you know that you must give me back:  
Send I bid him come"; but Lionel was away—  
Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none knew where.  
"He casts me out," she wept, "and goes"—a wail  
That seeming something, yet was nothing, born  
Not from believing mind, but shatter'd nerve,  
Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof  
At some precipitance in her burial.  
Then, when her own true spirit had return'd,  
"O yes, and you," she said, "and none but you." [again,  
For you have given me life and love  
And none but you yourself shall tell him of it,  
And you shall give me back when he returns."  
"Stay then a little," answer'd Julian, "here,  
And keep yourself, none knowing, to yourself;  
And I will do your will. I may not stay,  
No, not an hour; but send me notice of him  
When he returns, and then will I return,  
And I will make a solemn offering of you  
To him you love." And faintly she replied,  
"And I will do your will, and none shall know."  
Not know? with such a secret to be known.

But all their house was old and loved them both,  
And all the house had known the loves of both ;  
Had died almost to serve them any way,  
And all the land was waste and solitary ;  
And then he rode away ; but after this,  
An hour or two, Camilla's travail came  
Upon her, and that day a boy was born,  
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,  
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,  
There fever seized upon him ; myself was then  
Travelling that land, and meant to rest an hour ;  
And sitting down to such a base repast,  
It makes me angry yet to speak of it.—  
I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd  
The moulder'd stairs (for everything was vile) [him,  
And in a loft, with none to wait on Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone, Raving of dead men's dust and beating hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,  
A flat malarian world of reed and rush !  
But there from fever and my care of him  
Sprang up a friendship that may help us yet.  
For while we roam'd along the dreary coast,  
And waited for her message, piece by piece  
I learnt the drearier story of his life ;  
And, tho' he loved and honour'd Lionel,  
Found that the sudden wail his lady made  
Dwelt in his fancy : did he know her worth,

Her beauty even ? should he not be taught,  
Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,  
The value of that jewel he had to guard ?

Suddenly came her notice and we past,  
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind, the soul :  
That makes the sequel pure ; tho' some of us Beginning at the sequel know no more.  
Not such am I : and yet I say, the bird  
That will not hear my call, however sweet,  
But if my neighbour whistle answers him—  
What matter ? there are others in the wood.  
Yet when I saw her (and I thought him crazed,  
Tho' not with such a craziness as needs  
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes of hers—  
Oh ! such dark eyes ! and not her eyes alone,  
But all from these to where she touch'd on earth,  
For such a craziness as Julian's seem'd  
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came  
To greet us, her young hero in her arms !  
"Kiss him," she said. "You gave me life again.  
He, but for you, had never seen it once.  
His other father you ! Kiss him, and then  
Forgive him, if his name be Julian too."

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart ! his own

Sent such a flame into his face, I  
knew  
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him  
there.

But he was all the more resolved  
to go,  
And sent at once to Lionel, praying  
him  
By that great love they both had  
borne the dead,  
To come and revel for one hour with  
him  
Before he left the land for evermore ;  
And then to friends—they were not  
many—who lived  
Scatteringly about that lonely land  
of his,  
And bade them to a banquet of fare-  
wells.

And Julian made a solemn feast : I  
never  
Sat at a costlier ; for all round his  
hall  
From column on to column, as in a  
wood,  
Not such as here—an equatorial one,  
Great garlands swung and blossom'd ;  
and beneath,  
Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of  
Art,  
Chalice and salver, wines that,  
Heaven knows when,  
Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten  
sun,  
And kept it thro' a hundred years of  
gloom,  
Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups  
Where nymph and god ran ever  
round in gold—  
Others of glass as costly—some with  
gems  
Movable and resettable at will,  
And trebling all the rest in value—  
Ah heavens !

Why need I tell you all ?—suffice to  
say  
That whatsoever such a house as his,  
And his was old, has in it rare or fair  
Was brought before the guest : and  
they, the guests,  
Wonder'd at some strange light in  
Julian's eyes

T.P.W.

(I told you that he had his golden  
hour),  
And such a feast, ill-suited as it  
seem'd  
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and  
his,  
And that resolved self-exile from a  
land  
He never would revisit, such a feast  
So rich, so strange, and stranger  
ev'n than rich,  
But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the  
hall  
Two great funereal curtains, looping  
down,  
Parted a little ere they met the floor,  
About a picture of his lady, taken  
Some years before, and falling hid the  
frame.  
And just above the parting was a  
lamp :  
So the sweet figure folded round with  
night  
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with  
a smile.

Well then—our solemn feast—we  
ate and drank,  
And might—the wines being of such  
nobleness—  
Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,  
And something weird and wild about  
it all :  
What was it ? for our lover seldom  
spoke,  
Scarce touch'd the meats ; but ever  
and anon  
A priceless goblet with a priceless  
wine  
Arising, show'd he drank beyond  
his use ;  
And when the feast was near an end,  
he said :

“ There is a custom in the Orient,  
friends—  
I read of it in Persia—when a man  
Will honour those who feast with him,  
he brings  
And shows them whatsoever he  
accounts  
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,

Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may  
be,  
This custom—”

Pausing here a moment, all  
The guests broke in upon him with  
meting hands  
And cries about the banquet—  
“Beautiful!  
Who could desire more beauty at a  
feast?”

The lover answer'd, “There is  
more than one  
Here sitting who desires it. Laud  
me not  
Before my time, but hear me to the  
close.  
This custom steps yet further when  
the guest  
Is loved and honour'd to the utter-  
most.  
For after he has shown him gems or  
gold,  
He brings and sets before him in rich  
guise  
That which is thrice as beautiful as  
these,  
The beauty that is dearest to his  
heart—  
‘O my heart's lord, would I could  
show you,’ he says,  
‘Ev'n my heart, too,’ And I propose  
to-night  
To show you what is dearest to my  
heart,  
And my heart, too.

“But solve me first a doubt,  
I knew a man, nor many years ago;  
He had a faithful servant, one who  
loved  
His master more than all on earth  
beside.  
He falling sick, and seeming close on  
death,  
His master would not wait until he  
died,  
But bade his menials bear him from  
the door,  
And leave him in the public way to  
die.  
I knew another, not so long ago,  
Who found the dying servant, took  
him home,

And fed, and cherish'd him, and  
saved his life.  
I ask you now, should this first  
master claim  
His service, whom does it belong to ?  
him  
Who thrust him out, or him who  
saved his life ? ”

This question, so flung down before  
the guests,  
And balanced either way by each, at  
length  
When some were doubtful how the  
law would hold,  
Was handed over by consent of all  
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate  
of phrase.  
And he beginning languidly—his loss  
Weigh'd on him yet—but warming  
as he went,  
Glanced at the point of law, to pass it  
by,  
Affirming that as long as either lived,  
By all the laws of love and grateful-  
ness,  
The service of the one so saved was  
due  
All to the saver—adding, with a  
smile,  
The first for many weeks—a semi-  
smile  
As at a strong conclusion—“ body  
and soul  
And life and limbs, all his to work his  
will.”

Then Julian made a secret sign to  
me  
To bring Camilla down before them  
all.  
And crossing her own picture as she  
came,  
And looking as much lovelier as  
herself  
Is lovelier than all others—on her  
head  
A diamond circlet, and from under  
this  
A veil, that seem'd no more than  
gilded air,  
Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern  
gauze

With seeds of gold—so, with that grace of hers,  
 Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,  
 That flings a mist behind it in the sun—  
 And bearing high in arms the mighty babe,  
 The younger Julian, who himself was crown'd  
 With roses, none so rosy as himself—  
 And over all her babe and her the jewels  
 Of many generations of his house  
 Sparkled and flash'd, for he had decked them out  
 As for a solemn sacrifice of love—  
 So she came in :—I am long in telling it—  
 I never yet beheld a thing so strange,  
 Sad, sweet, and strange together—  
 floated in,—  
 While all the guests in mute amazement rose,—  
 And slowly pacing to the middle hall,  
 Before the board, there paused and stood, her breast [scot,  
 Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her  
 Not daring yet to glance at Lionel,  
 But him she carried, him nor lights  
 nor feast  
 Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men ;  
 who cared  
 Only to use his own, and staring wide  
 And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd world  
 About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,  
 When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

“ My guests,” said Julian : “ you are honour'd now  
 Ev'n to the uttermost : in her behold  
 Of all my treasures the most beautiful,  
 Of all things upon earth the dearest to me.”

Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,  
 Led his dear lady to a chair of state.  
 And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face  
 Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again  
 Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,

And heard him muttering, “ So like,  
 so like ;  
 She never had a sister. I knew none,  
 Some cousin of his and hers—O God,  
 so like ! ”  
 And then he suddenly ask'd her if she were.  
 She shook, and cast her eyes down,  
 and was dumb.  
 And then some other question'd if she came  
 From foreign lands, and still she did not speak.  
 Another, if the boy were hers : but she  
 To all their queries answer'd not a word,  
 Which made the amazement more,  
 till one of them  
 Said, shuddering, “ Her spectre ! ”  
 But his friend  
 Replied, in half a whisper, “ Not at least [to.  
 The spectre that will speak if spoken  
 Terrible pity, if one so beautiful  
 Prove, as I almost dread to find her,  
 dumb ! ”

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd all :  
 “ She is but dumb, because in her you see  
 That faithful servant whom we spoke about,  
 Obedient to her second master now ;  
 Which will not last. I have here to-night a guest  
 So bound to me by common love and loss—  
 What ! shall I bind him more ? in his behalf,  
 Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him  
 That which of all things is the dearest to me,  
 Not only showing ? and he himself pronounced  
 That my rich gift is wholly mine to give.

“ Now all be dumb, and promise all of you  
 Not to break in on what I say by word  
 Or whisper, while I show you all my heart.”

And then began the story of his love  
As here to-day, but not so wordily—  
The passionate moment would not  
suffer that—  
Past thro' his visions to the burial ;  
thence  
Down to this last strange hour in his  
own hall ;  
And then rose up, and with him all his  
guests  
Once more as by enchantment ; all  
but he,  
Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell  
again,  
And sat as if in chains—to whom he  
said :

“ Take my free gift, my cousin,  
for your wife ;  
And were it only for the giver's sake,  
And tho' she seem so like the one you  
lost,  
Yet cast her not away so suddenly,  
Lest there be none left here to bring  
her back :  
I leave this land for ever.” Hero he  
ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one  
hand,  
And bearing, on one arm the noble  
babe, [Lionel.]  
He slowly brought them both to  
And there the widower husband and  
dead wife  
Rush'd each at each with a cry, that  
rather seem'd  
For some new death than for a life  
renew'd ;  
Whereat the very babe began to  
wail ;  
At once they turn'd, and caught and  
brought him in  
To their charm'd circle, and, half-  
killing him  
With kisses, round him closed and  
claspt again.  
But Lionel, when at last he freed  
himself  
From wife and child, and lifted up a  
face  
All over glowing with the sun of life,  
And love, and boundless thanks—  
the sight of this .

So brighted our good friend, that  
turning to me  
And saying, “ It is over : let us go ”—  
There were our horses ready at the  
doors—  
We bade them no farewell, but mount-  
ing these  
He past for ever from his native  
land ;  
And I with him, my Julian, back to  
mine.

## THE VICTIM

## I

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,  
A famine after laid them low,  
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,  
For on them brake the sudden foe ;  
So thick they died the people cried  
“ The Gods are moved against the  
land.”

The Priest in horror about his altar  
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand :  
“ Help us from famine  
And plague and strife !  
What would you have of us ?  
Human life ?  
Were it our nearest,  
Were it our dearest,  
(Answer, O answer)  
We give you his life.”

## II

But still the foeman spoil'd and  
burn'd,  
And cattle died, and deer in wood,  
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd  
And whitened all the rolling flood ;  
And dead men lay all over the way,  
Or down in a furrow scathed with  
flame :  
And ever and aye the Priesthood  
moan'd  
Till at last it seem'd that an answer  
came :  
“ The King is happy  
In child and wife ;  
Take you his dearest,  
Give us a life.”

## III

The Priest went out by heath and  
hill ;  
The King was hunting in the wild ;

They found the mother sitting still ;  
 She cast her arms about the child.  
 The child was only eight summers old,  
   His beauty still with his years  
   increased,  
 His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,  
 He seem'd a victim due to the  
   priest.

The Priest beheld him,  
 And cried with joy,  
   "The Gods have answer'd :  
   We give them the boy."

## IV

The King return'd from out the wild,  
 He bore but little game in hand ;  
 The mother said " They have taken  
   the child  
   To spill his blood and heal the  
   land :  
 The land is sick, the people diseased,  
   And blight and famine on all the  
   lea :  
 The holy Gods, they must be ap-  
   peased,  
 So I pray you tell the truth to me.  
   They have takon our son,  
   They will have his life.  
   Is he your dearest ?  
   Or I, the wife ? "

## V

The King bent low, with hand on  
 brow,  
 He stay'd his arms upon his knee :  
 " O wife, what use to answer now ?  
 For now the Priest has judged for  
   me."  
 The King was shaken with holy fear :  
   "The Gods," he said, " would  
   have chosen well ;  
 Yet both are near, and both are dear,  
   And which the dearest I cannot  
   tell ! "

But the Priest was happy,  
 His victim won :  
   "We have his dearest,  
   His only son ! "

## VI

The rites prepared, the victim bared,  
 The knife uprising toward the  
   blow,  
 To the altar-stone she sprang alone,  
   " Me, not my darling, no ! "

He caught her away with a sudden  
   cry ;

Suddenly from him brake his wife,  
 And shrieking " I am his dearest, I—  
   I am his dearest ! " rush'd on the  
   knife.

And the Priest was happy,  
   " O, Father Odin,  
   We give you a life.  
   Which was his nearest ?  
   Who was his dearest ?  
   The Gods have answer'd ;  
   We give them the wife ! "

## WAGES

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator,  
   glory of song,  
 Paid with a voice flying by to be  
   lost on an endless sea—  
 Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle,  
   to right the wrong—  
 Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no  
   lover of glory she :  
 Give her the glory of going on, and  
   still to be,  
 The wages of sin is death : if the  
   wages of Virtue be dust,  
 Would she have heart to endure for  
   the life of the worm and the fly ?  
 She desires no isles of the blest, no  
   quiet scats of the just,  
 To rest in a golden grove, or to bask  
   in a summer sky :  
 Give her the wages of going on, and  
   not to die.

## THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the  
 seas, the hills and the plains—  
 Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of  
   Him Who reigns ?

Is not the Vision He ? tho' He be not  
   that which He seems ?  
 Dreams are true while they last, and  
   do we not live in dreams ?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of  
   body and limb,  
 Are they not sign and symbol of thy  
   division from Him ?

Dark is the world to thee : thyself  
   art the reason why ;

For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I am I?"

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom, Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet— Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice, For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool; For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool; And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see; But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

FLOWER in the crannied wall, I pluck you out of the crannies;— Hold you here, root and all, in my hand, Little flower—but if I could understand What you are, root and all, and all in all, I should know what God and man is.

#### LUCRETIUS

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found Her master cold; for when the morning flush Of passion and the first embrace had died Between them, tho' he loved her none the less, Yet often when the woman heard his foot Return from pacings in the field, and ran To greet him with a kiss, the master took Small notice, or austereley, for—his mind

Half buried in some weightier argument,

Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise And long roll of the Hexameter—he past

To turn and ponder those three hundred scrolls

Left by the Teacher whom he held divine.

She brook'd it not; but wrathful, petulant,

Dreaming some rival, sought and found a witch

Who brew'd the philtre which had power, they said,

To lead an errant passion home again. And this, at times, she mingled with his drink,

And this destroy'd him; for the wicked broil

Confused the chemic labour of the blood,

And tickling the brute brain within the man's

Made havock among those tender cells, and check'd

His power to shape: he loath'd himself; and once

After a tempest woke upon a morn That mock'd him with returning calm, and cried;

"Storm in the night! for thrice I heard the rain

Rushing; and once the flash of a thunderbolt—

Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—

Struck out the streaming mountain-side, and show'd

A riotous confluence of watercourses Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,

Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

"Storm, and what dreams, ye holy Gods, what dreams!

For thrice I waken'd after dreams. Perchance

We do but recollect the dreams that come

Just ere the waking: terrible! for it seem'd

A void was made in Nature ; all her bonds  
 Crack'd ; and I saw the flaring atom-streams  
 And torrents of her myriad universe,  
 Ruining along the illimitable infinite,  
 Fly on to clash together again, and make  
 Another and another frame of things  
 For ever : that was mine, my dream,  
 I knew it—  
 Of and belonging to me, as the dog  
 With inward yelp and restless forefoot  
 plies  
 His function of the woodland : but  
 the next ! [shed  
 I thought that all the blood by Sylla  
 Came driving rainlike down again on earth,  
 And where it dash'd the reddening meadow, sprang [teeth,  
 No dragon warriors from Cadmean For these I thought my dream would  
 show to me,  
 But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,  
 Hired animalisms, vile as those that made  
 The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies worse  
 Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.  
 And hands they mixt, and yell'd and round me drove  
 In narrowing circles till I yell'd again  
 Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw—  
 Was it the first beam of my latest day ?  
 “ Then, then, from utter gloom stood out the breasts, The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a sword  
 Now over and now under, now direct, Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down shamed  
 At all that beauty ; and as I stared, a fire,  
 The fire that left a roofless Iliion, Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that I woke.  
 “ Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus, thine,

Because I would not one of thine own doves,  
 Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee ? thine,  
 Forgetful how my rich procomion makes  
 Thy glory fly along the Italian field,  
 In lays that will outlast thy Deity ?  
 “ Deity ? nay, thy worshippers. My tongue  
 Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of these  
 Angers thee most, or angers thee at all ?  
 Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof  
 From envy, hate and pity, and spite and scorn,  
 Live the great life which all our greatest fain  
 Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.  
 “ Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like ourselves  
 Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry to thee  
 To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms  
 Round him, and keep him from the lust of blood  
 That makes a steaming slaughterhouse of Rome.  
 “ Ay, but I meant not thee ; I incant not her,  
 Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see  
 Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and tempt  
 The Trojan, while his neat-herds were abroad ;  
 Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter wept  
 Her Deity false in human-amorous tears ;  
 Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter  
 Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods, Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called  
 Calliope to grace his golden verse—  
 Ay, and this Kypris also—did I take  
 That popular name of thine to shadow forth

The all-generating powers and genial heat  
 Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the thick blood  
 Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs are glad  
 Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird  
 Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of flowers :  
 Which things appear the work of mighty Gods.

" The Gods ! and if I go *my* work is left  
 Unfinish'd—if I go. The Gods, who haunt  
 The lucid interspace of world and world,  
 Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,  
 Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,  
 Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,  
 Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar  
 Their sacred everlasting calm ! and such,  
 Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,  
 Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain  
 Letting his own life go. The Gods, the Gods !  
 If all be atoms, how then should the Gods  
 Being atomic not be dissoluble,  
 Not follow the great law ? My master hold  
 That Gods there are, for all men so believe. [meant  
 I prest my footsteps into his, and surely to lead my Mēmmius in a train  
 Of flowery clauses onward to the proof  
 That Gods there are, and deathless.  
 Meant ? I meant ?  
 I have forgotten what I meant : my mind  
 Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.  
 " Look where another of our Gods, the Sun,

Apollo, Delius, or of older use All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—  
 Has mounted yonder ; since he never swarc,  
 Except his wrath were wreak'd on wretched man,  
 That he would only shine among the dead  
 Hereafter ; tales ! for never yet on earth  
 Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting ox  
 Moan round the spit—nor knows he what he sees  
 King of the East altho' he seem, and girt  
 With song and flame and fragrance, slowly lifts  
 His golden feet on those empurpled stairs  
 That climb into the windy halls of heaven :  
 And here he glances on an eye new-born,  
 And gets for greeting but a wail of pain ;  
 And here he stays upon a freezing orb  
 That fain would gaze upon him to the last ;  
 And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n  
 And closed by those who mourn a friend in vain,  
 Not thankful that his troubles are no more.  
 And me, altho' his fire is on my face  
 Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell  
 Whether I mean this day to end myself,  
 Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,  
 That men like soldiers may not quit the post [holds  
 Allotted by the Gods : but he that  
 The Gods are careless, wherefore need he care  
 Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at once,  
 Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and sink  
 Past earthquake—ay, and gout and stone, that break  
 Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-life,

And wretched age—and worst disease  
of all,  
These prodigies of myriad naked-  
nesses,  
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeak-  
able,  
Abominable, strangers at my hearth,  
Not welcome, harpies miring every  
dish,  
The phantom husks of something  
fouly done,  
And fleeting thro' the boundless  
universe,  
And blasting the long quiet of my  
breast  
With animal heat and dire insanity ?

“ How should the mind, except it  
loved them, clasp  
These idols to herself ? or do they  
fly  
Now thinner, and now thicker, like  
the flakes  
In a fall of snow, and so press in,  
perforce  
Of multitude, as crowds that in an  
hour  
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and  
bear  
The keepers down, and throng, their  
rags and they,  
The basest, far into that council-hall  
Where sit the best and stateliest of  
the land ?

“ Can I not fling this horror off  
me again,  
Seeing with how great ease Nature  
can smile,  
Balmier and nobler from her bath of  
storm,  
At random ravage ? and how easily  
The mountain there has cast his  
cloudy slough.  
Now towering o'er him in serenest air,  
A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay  
and within  
All hollow as the hopes and fears of  
men ?

“ But who was he, that in the  
garden snared  
Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods ? a  
tale

To laugh at—more to laugh at in  
myself—  
For look ! what is it ? there ? yon  
arbutus  
Totters ; a noiseless riot underneath  
Strikes through the wood, sets all the  
tops quivering—  
The mountain quickens into Nymph  
and Faun ;  
And here an Oread—how the sun  
delights  
To glance and shift about her slip-  
pery sides,  
And rosy knees and supple rounded-  
ness,  
And budded bosom-peaks—who this  
way runs  
Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see,  
Follows ; but him I proved impossible ;  
Twy-natured is no nature : yet he  
draws  
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him  
now  
Beastlier than any phantom of his  
kind  
That ever butted his rough brother-  
brute  
For lust or lusty blood or provender :  
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him ;  
and she  
Loathes him as well ; such a precipi-  
tate heel,  
Fledged as it were with Mercury's  
ankle-wing,  
Whirls her to me : but will she fling  
herself,  
Shameless upon me ? Catch her,  
goatfoot : nay,  
Hide, hide them, million-myrtled  
wilderness,  
And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide !  
do I wish—  
What ?—that the bush were leafless ?  
or towhelm  
All of them in one massacre ? O ye  
Gods,  
I know you careless, yet, behold, to  
you  
From childly wont and ancient use I  
call—  
I thought I lived securely as your-  
selves—  
No lewdness, narrowing envy, mon-  
key-spite,

No madness of ambition, avarice,  
none :  
No larger feast than under plane or  
pine  
With neighbours laid along the grass,  
to take  
Only such cups as left us friendly-  
warm,  
Affirming each his own philosophy—  
Nothing to mar the sober majesties  
Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.  
But now it seems some unseen  
monster lays  
His vast and filthy hands upon my  
will,  
Wrenching it backward into his ; and  
spoils  
My bliss in being ; and it was not  
great ;  
For save when shutting reasons up  
in rhythm,  
Or Hellenic honey in living words,  
To make a truth less harsh, I often  
grew  
Tired of so much within our little life,  
Or of so little in our little life—  
Poor little life that toddles half an  
hour  
Crown'd with a flower or two, and  
there an end—  
And since the nobler pleasure seems  
to fade,  
Why should I, beastlike as I find  
myself,  
Not manlike end myself ?—our  
privilege—  
What beast has heart to do it ? And  
what man,  
What Roman would be dragg'd in  
triumph thus ?  
Not I ; not he, who bears one name  
with her  
Whose death-blow struck the dateless  
doom of kings,  
When, brooking not the Tarquin in  
her veins,  
She made her blood in sight of  
Collatine [less air,  
And all his peers, flushing the guilt-  
Spout from the maiden fountain in  
her heart.  
And from it sprang the Common-  
wealth, which breaks  
As I am breaking now !

“ And therefore now  
Let her, that is the womb and tomb  
of all,  
Great Nature, take, and forcing far  
apart  
Those blind beginnings that have  
made me man  
Dash them anew together at her will  
Through all her cycles—into man  
once more,  
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent  
flower :  
But till this cosmic order everywhere  
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one  
day  
Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour  
perhaps  
Is not so far when momentary man  
Shall seem no more a something to  
himself,  
But he, his hopes and hates, his homes  
and fanes,  
And even his bones long laid within  
the grave,  
The very sides of the grave itself  
shall pass,  
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and  
void,  
Into the unseen for ever,—till that  
hour,  
My golden work in which I told a  
truth  
That stays the rolling Ixonian  
wheel,  
And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake,  
and plucks  
The mortal soul from out immortal  
hell,  
Shall stand : ay, surely : then it fails  
at last  
And perishes as I must ; for O Thou,  
Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,  
Yearn'd after by the wisest of the  
wise,  
Who fail to find thee, being as thou  
art  
Without one pleasure and without  
one pain,  
Howbeit I know thou surely must be  
mine  
Or soon or late, yet out of season,  
thus  
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest  
not

How roughly men may woo thee so  
they win—  
Thus—thus : the soul flies out and  
dies in the air.”

With that he drove the knife into  
his side :  
She heard him raging, heard him fall ;

Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon  
herself [shrick'd  
As having fail'd in duty to him,  
That she but meant to win him back,  
fell on him,  
Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd : he an-  
swer'd, “Care not thou !  
Thy duty ? What is duty ? Fare  
thee well ! ”



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